This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

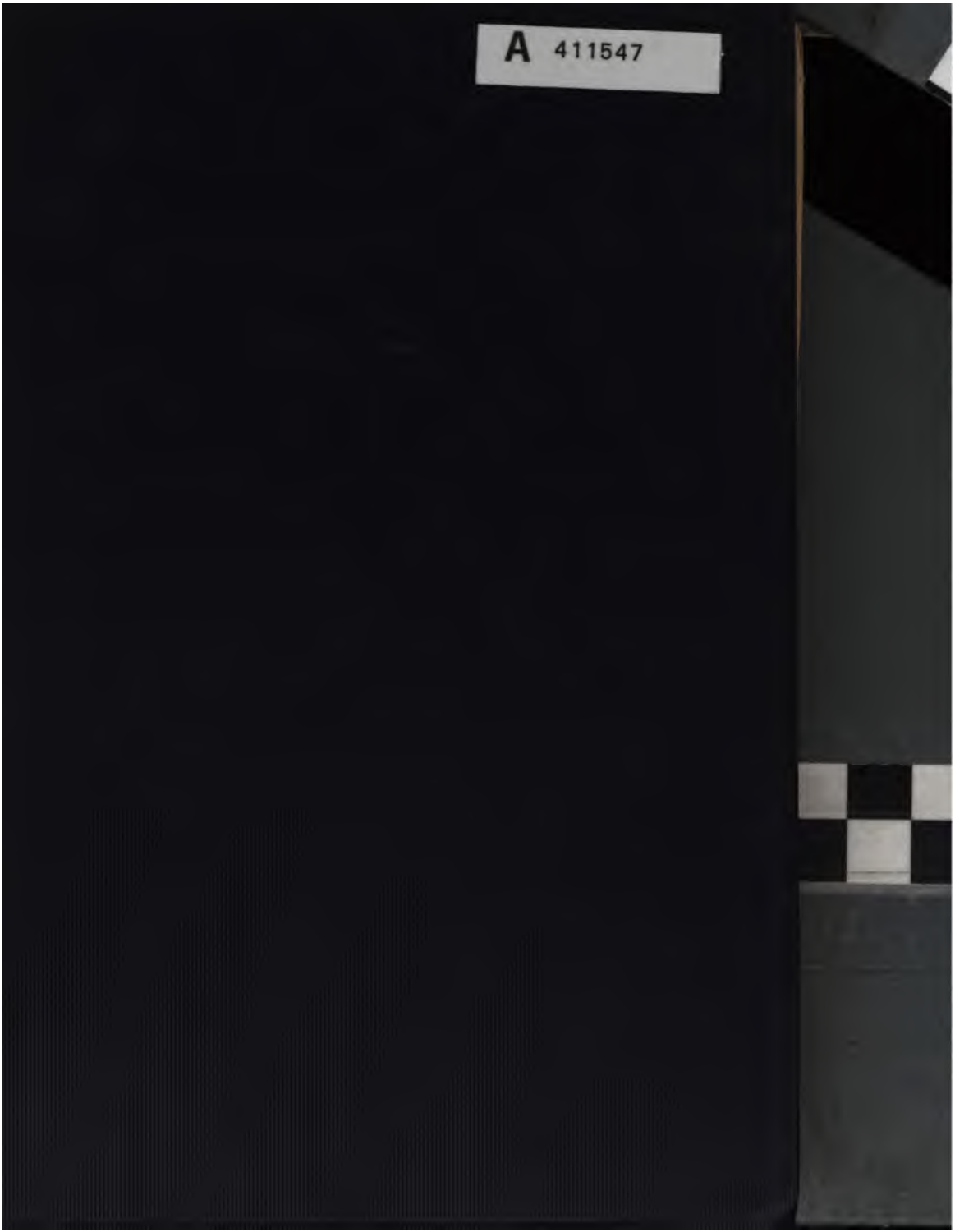
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

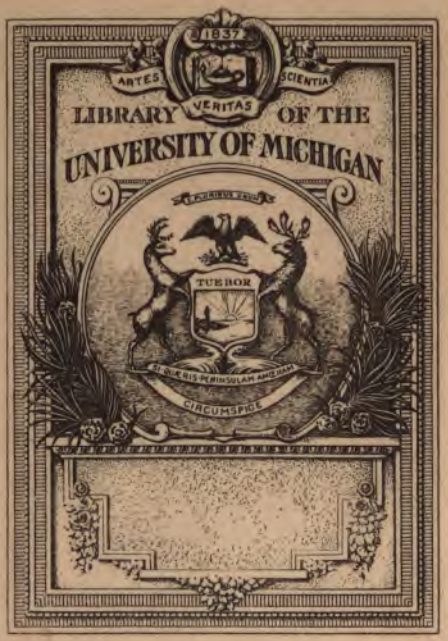
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


A 411547



THE GIFT OF
Rev. H. A. Jump.

BR
121
.H174

THE UNIVERSAL ELEMENTS
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION

The Cole Lectures for 1905
delivered before Vanderbilt University

The Universal Elements of the Christian Religion

An attempt to interpret contemporary religious conditions

By
CHARLES CUTHBERT HALL, DD., LL. D.
President of the Union Theological Seminary, New York

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Copyright, 1905, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 80 Wabash Avenue
Toronto: 27 Richmond Street, W.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

THE COLE LECTURES

THE late Colonel E. W. Cole of Nashville, Tennessee, donated to Vanderbilt University the sum of five thousand dollars, afterwards increased by his widow to ten thousand; the design and conditions of which gift are stated as follows:

"The object of this fund is to establish a foundation for a perpetual Lectureship in connection with the Biblical Department of the University, to be restricted in its scope to a defense and advocacy of the Christian religion. The lectures shall be delivered at such intervals, from time to time, as shall be deemed best by the Board of Trust; and the particular theme and lecturer shall be determined by nomination of the Theological Faculty and confirmation of the College of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Said lecturer shall always be reduced to writing in full, and the manuscript of the same shall be the property of the University, to be published or disposed of by the Board of Trust at its discretion, the net proceeds arising therefrom to be added to the foundation fund, or otherwise used for the benefit of the Biblical Department."

To the Reverend
The Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church
South
with admiration
for their character
their experience
and
their far-reaching labours
in
the Kingdom of God
these Lectures
are
dedicated

Nonne vos dicitis, quod adhuc quatuor menses sunt, et messis venit? Ecce dico vobis: Levate oculos vestros, et videte regiones, quia albæ sunt jam ad messem.

JESU CHRISTI EVANGELIUM SECUNDEM JOANNEM.

O Almighty God, who hast built Thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANCIENT COLLECT.

Rev. H. A. Jump
5-10-27

Contents

PREFACE 13

THE CHURCH AND THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE WORLD . . 21

THE BEARING OF SECTARIAN MOVEMENTS UPON THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE WORLD . . . 57

THE RECOVERY OF THE APOSTOLIC THEOLOGY 101

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD . . 151

THE CONSTRUCTIVE OFFICE OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM 205

THE LARGER CHURCH OF CHRIST . 257

Preface

THE following Lectures represent an attempt to interpret contemporary religious conditions. Our Lord is reported, in the Third Gospel, as saying: "When ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it cometh to pass. And when ye see a south wind blowing, ye say, There will be a scorching heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?" The effort to understand one's own time is commended by Christ. It also commends itself to the reason and the conscience. To live is a privilege and an opportunity, measured by the sincerity of one's desire to know the will of God and to lend oneself to the advancement of His Kingdom. It may be that each age has

seemed wonderful and significant to some who have lived in it. But, without doubt, the present age challenges the interest of all thoughtful minds. Great changes are taking place; suggesting others, still greater, to follow. It is difficult to realize that any one can be unconscious of the fundamental reconstructions that are looming up on the horizon of possibility in many lines of religious thinking. Outwardly the institutional *status quo* continues, as between the sects of Protestantism; as between the Protestant, Roman and Greek communions; as between Christianity and non-Christian faiths; as between West and East. The unobservant, trusting to institutional appearances, may immerse themselves in local affairs and persuade themselves that all things continue as they were from the beginning. Meanwhile, to those who obey our Lord's command, "Levate oculos vestros, et videte regiones," the whole face of Christendom and of the world seems as a vast harvest-field of ripening grain, swaying and bowing like the fluent billows of the sea,

beneath the breathing of the viewless Wind of God. Many elements of an order regarded for generations as unchangeable are in process of change. Many sectarian issues, long thought to be vital, cease to interest the public mind, which is absorbed in larger questions. Influences, emanating from Protestant convictions of religious liberty of conscience, are reacting upon the Roman communion, which gives forth signs of impending reconstructions. Light has been thrown on Oriental thought, and the East moves inquiringly towards Christ. The Bible, emerging from the strenuous controversies of sixty years, assumes a new authority over human thinking; an authority more powerful because of the spirit rather than of the letter. The Divine Spirit is moving mightily. Searchings of heart are everywhere. A glorious vision of God has swept like sunlight across the field of thought. The influence of religion upon university life is unprecedented. Universities of the West are entering the field of world-Christianization and projecting themselves

into regions of the Nearer and Farther East. The Christian students of the world have placed themselves upon a basis that discards racial and sectarian distinctions and have undertaken to propagate the undifferentiated essence of the Christian religion. Christianity, rooted in the East, approaches at many points the stage of self-determining development, and is producing leaders competent to form institutions and literature of an Oriental Church of Jesus Christ. Such are some of the phenomena of the present time. That they are coordinated parts of God's redemptive plan for the world none can doubt who believes that every purpose of Christ's Incarnation shall be fulfilled. But the study of contemporary conditions is a work of much difficulty. The observer stands in the midst of his objects of study. Perspective is not readily obtained. The significance of relationships may be misapprehended. Qualities of personal temperament, cherished personal associations, unconscious prejudice may preoccupy the mind and disturb the equipoise of judg-

ment. One may be tempted to read into the present time an interpretation unduly affected by one's preferences and hopes.

My consciousness of these, and other, limitations presses upon me as I make public these Lectures. I have tried to discover the deeper tendency of the religious thinking of our time, wherein the critical movement, the modern view of the Bible, the declining interest in sectarianism, the increased cosmopolitanism and the larger conceptions of world-Christianization are powerful elements. It is true that I speak from the point of view of one holding the Pauline and Johannine view of the Person and Work of our Blessed Lord. But I trust that my interpretation of modern conditions, especially as set forth in the Lecture on "The Recovery of the Apostolic Theology" represents much more than a fond wish. It is the expression of my deepest conviction concerning the actual meaning and outcome of the present momentous situation. That the current disposition to minimize the metaphysical

aspects of the New Testament, and to reduce the Christian basis to the narratives of the Synoptists points to a permanent evacuation of the major apostolic positions, seems to me wholly incredible; the theory of a school, unsupported by the consensus of Christian thinking. On the other hand, I believe that the larger movement of thought, both in Protestantism and in the Roman communion, returns like a tide "too full for sound or foam" to the apostolic faith in a Mediator whose nature can be neither fathomed nor limited; in whose immortal fullness lie untold possibilities, for the reconstruction of the Church on larger lines than any yet projected, and for the reconciliation of the world to God. It is not improbable that, in the course of these Lectures, I have at times yielded to the enthusiasm and buoyancy of hope, notwithstanding every effort to maintain a temper of judicial self-restraint. I may, also, by reason of ignorance, have represented inadequately the opinions of others. For such errors, the fruits of no perverse intention, I ask the

charity of my readers. My attitude towards sectarian institutions is one of reverent appreciation, although I cannot regard them, as, in their present form, an adequate expression of the genius of the Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I wish, in conclusion, to express my appreciation of the earnestness, devotion and breadth of view that mark Vanderbilt University, the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Southern circles of Christian culture. To have dwelt among such associations for a time, is to have experienced an enrichment of life. As one who has been in the East hears, evermore, "the East a' calling," so, to have been admitted to the fellowship of the beautiful, gracious, sensitive, intellectual, religious South is to have heard a voice that must echo in one's remembrance to the end.

CHARLES CUTHBERT HALL.

Synton, Westport Point, Massachusetts,
August, 1905.

LECTURE I

THE CHURCH AND THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE WORLD

LECTURE I

THE CHURCH AND THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE WORLD

THE ultimate standard by which to measure the efforts of the Church for the Christianization of the world is the untrammelled cosmopolitanism of the mind of Christ. For Him there were no race prejudices, no party lines, no sectarian limits, no favoured nation. There was nothing between His love and the world. His heart beat for the world—and, on Calvary, broke for the world. His knowledge of Himself in world relations was the essence of simplicity. "I am the Light of the world."[1] "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself."[2] The Lord Jesus Christ, in His Incarnate ministry, was the Divine Man without a country. "Foxes have holes," He said, "and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not

[1] John 8 : 12. [2] John 12 : 32.

where to lay His head."[1] It is true that He came of the house and lineage of David; that in childhood and youth He abode with His parents and was subject unto them; that from the cross He looked upon His mother, acknowledged the filial bond, arranged for her protection. In this He honoured ties of country, blood-relationship, personal love. But in His knowledge of Himself as Son of Man and Son of God, He rose above kindred and country to embrace the world. "Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?" He asks; and answers, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother."[2]

To measure up to the cosmopolitanism of the mind of Christ, to take His simple view of duty to the world, is the challenge that has faced the Church from the beginning. And from the beginning she has faltered before that challenge; not because it is too difficult, but because it is too simple. Always the Church has been proposing to have something done, other and more difficult than the

[1] Luke 9: 58. [2] Matt. 12: 48–50.

thing which Christ would have to be done. Shortly before the Ascension He drew aside the apostolic group, then the nucleus of the Church, to give it parting counsel. Perceiving that some plan of action was about to be announced, they thought of one of the most difficult and delicate things that could be done, a thing that would involve a political revolution: "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" What grave gentleness of rebuke—what revelation of a simpler and larger plan, in His reply: "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be My witnesses unto . . . the uttermost part of the earth."[1] What contrast between their thought and His: theirs the thought of a *coup d'état* in Palestine, a local clash in a corner of the Roman Empire—His the thought of sending His messengers of peace, in the power of the Spirit, unto the uttermost part of the earth—to Christianize the world!

[1] Acts 1: 6–8.

Even after Pentecost, with its anointing for world-wide service, other misconceptions within the Church partly nullified for her the cosmopolitanism of Jesus Christ. Chief of these, perhaps, was provincialism. Peter, called to Christianize some Gentiles, falters, under an impression that outside of Israel can be no moral basis on which to work. To his thinking the Gentile world was the outer darkness; corrupt, abominable, unrelieved by any spiritual gleam. But in Cornelius he finds a heathen by name, who is a disciple and a saint in fact; and Peter's confession is as manly in its frankness as it is interesting in its suggestion of many a modern surprise over a similar discovery: "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him."[1] In contrast with this early provincialism in the Christian group, how superb is the cosmopolitanism of St. Paul in his ultimatum to the Jews, spoken in the synagogue at Antioch: "It was necessary that the Word

[1] Acts 10: 34, 35.

of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us saying: I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth."[1]

In every age the cosmopolitanism of Jesus Christ has appealed to individual Christian souls, by reason of its simplicity and its directness. In every age it has been answered by the enthusiasm of some who broke out of the ranks of sectarian order and over the barriers of race antipathy to recognize in the non-Christian world fellow seekers after truth, who, though ignorant of western theology, might not be far from the Kingdom of God. In our time Christian Endeavour and Christian Association world-movements have been marked responses to the cosmopolitanism of Christ, gathering their impulse and drawing their authority from the simplicity and immediateness of the relation of

[1] Acts 13: 46.

the Son of God to all the sons of men. But the Church in its corporate life, as the organized group appointed to Christianize the world, has found serious difficulties in carrying out the task entrusted to it. As He outlined that task it seemed simple. As we have interpreted it, it has become complex. Recall His outline of the duty entrusted to the Church: "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[1] Wonderful in their absoluteness are these instructions as one reflects upon them! Christ assumes entire responsibility for the work appointed: "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth." It is not for us to question the adequacy of the mission committed to the Church, to add to it in any way, to establish tests that He

[1] Matt. 28: 18–20.

has not authorized, to lay down conditions that He has not sanctioned, to put up bars where He allows an open entrance. The authority is His, not ours.

Wonderful are these instructions for clearness, as conveying to us what the Christianization of the world means in the thought of Christ. It means to make disciples for Him of all the nations—not disciples of the Church, converts to certain schools of theological opinion: but, in all the nations, to win disciples for Christ, to draw men to Him, as, on earth, He drew men to Himself; so to set Him forth, in all the world, that the irresistible attraction of His Personality shall lay hold of all kindred spirits and gather them around Him. It means to give this gathering band of disciples, so cosmopolitan in character, a sacramental bond for purposes of mutual self-realization and companionship, whereby they shall know that they are one in their common Head: "baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It means to teach this gathering band of disciples how to trans-

late into the terms of life and conduct the very mind and word of Him whose glorious Person, as the manifested God, has drawn them to Himself: "Teaching them to observe (to practice, to incarnate in thought and in life) all things, whatsoever I commanded you." This is, to Christianize the world.

Wonderful are these instructions for assurance of sympathetic cooperation on His part. We are not left to fulfill this task alone, with the chance of failing by reason of our limitations: "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Christ Himself, by His vitalizing Spirit present in the Church, would direct the Christianization of the world.

So, the Saviour, born, according to the flesh, of an Oriental stock, commits the work begun by Himself to a group of Oriental apostles, chosen and ordained in Palestine, the crossroads of the world, set midway between East and West. For a little they falter, unable to grasp the cosmic simplicity of His instructions, doubting if He

really means to treat all men alike, ignoring race distinctions. Then, when the Original Band is augmented by the unfettered soul of Paul, who, though as one born out of due time, yet springs by sheer greatness to the real primacy in the Apostolate, the Christianization of the world begins, westward and eastward. In the blended light of history and legend we see those first great Christianizers speeding apart—St. Paul to Italy; St. Thomas, so it may be, to the Malabar Coast of India. For a season the Christianizing energy of the Apostolic Age persisted; at length forces quickened within the Church absorbed its attention; events pressing from without hid the primitive world-vision. Controversies, theological, metaphysical, ecclesiastical, developed the institutional interests of western Christendom, interests henceforth to seem of more importance to the Church than the simple personal ministry of reconciliation that had occupied the mind of Christ.

Greek Christianity and Latin Christianity divided and stood arrayed, the one against

the other. The power of Mohammedanism arose, the most enormous of the influences opposing the Christianization of the world. It stood between Europe and the Orient, closing the natural lines of intercommunication, absorbing the land of Christ's Nativity and Sacrifice, menacing the West, inundating the East. Christianity, primarily Oriental in form, perished in the home of apostles and survived in Europe under conventionalized and altered modes, as far from the primitive type as the West is from the East. With the Revival of Learning came exploration, cartography, the rediscovering of India and the Far East, together with a Jesuit revival of world-Christianization which, however pure in motive, saw fit to carry with it the Inquisition and the sword, and was repudiated with violence. The Protestant Reformation brought to northern Europe no impulse to take up the long deferred world-plan of Christ. Its immediate effects were fierce conflicts of the schools and sects at home; an invasion by armed commercialism of the non-Christian world abroad. At length the

rise of Pietism in Germany and the spiritual quickening that attended the Wesleyan movement and its cognates in England and America brought again, from the dead waste of dogmatism and ceremonialism, scattering efforts to obey Christ's will, and to enter into Christ's world-vision. Frowned on by the Church, disallowed by the State, suspected at home, injured and affronted by their Christian countrymen abroad, an illumined and impassioned group within the hardened and despiritualized Church began the modern work of world-Christianization. Glorious souls engaged in it. They had seen a vision; the vision of the world-relationships of Jesus Christ. Stung by the splendour of that vision they recoiled from the provincialism of a self-centred Church. They demanded and they obtained the coveted ordination: "Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles."[1] Thus was sown the seed of modern missions from the churches of the West to the lands and races of the East. It was sown in weakness, it has been

[1] Acts 22: 21.

raised in power. It was sown in dishonour, it has been raised in glory.

When we consider the drawbacks and disadvantages continually encountered, the results of Western missionary undertakings in the East seal them with the marks of the Lord Jesus. If we believe in Him, we must believe in these works as wrought through His Spirit and fostered by His care. The workers have shared the ordinary limitations and exhibited the ordinary frailties of human nature. They have wrought no miracles after the manner of apostles. Often they have advanced to their work under relative ignorance of conditions awaiting them. As a result of this ignorance, doubtless they have laboured under misapprehension, adding thereby to difficulties intrinsically great. Yet, to one who goes through the East with a mind discharged of prejudice and with the eyes of the understanding open to the world-vision of Christ, it is evident that a work already is done which, measured against the short time of its accomplishment, and the stumbling-blocks in its way, suggests the immediate cooperation and

blessing of God. Too much cannot be said of this wonderful work—which is done and which stands; foundations laid carefully and securely by those who knew well what they were doing and why they did it; influences set in motion and destined to go on, affecting more and more deeply the ideals and the customs of Oriental society; workers, called, cultured, chastened; many of them statesmen in the Kingdom of God. The translation of Holy Scripture into the vernaculars of the East; the introduction of schools, colleges and hospitals permeated with the Spirit of Christ; the daily object lesson of life in Christian homes; the living examples of Christian womanhood; the fidelity and tenderness of pastoral ministrations—these and other features of work already accomplished crown with glorious result the modern effort of the West to evangelize the East.

As we meditate upon this effort its reasonableness appears in certain distinct relations. It has contributed to the East a body of truth, an ideal of life, a type of experience. It has contributed a body of truth: the East

is flooded with copies of the Holy Scriptures; all nations and peoples and kindreds may read the Word of Inspiration in the tongues wherein they were born. It has disclosed an ideal of life,—*the Christian*—as a form of personality, essentially different from the Buddhist, the Mohammedan, the Hindu, the Confucianist. It has communicated a type of experience—the inward experience of the Christian life, with its hope, its conception of righteousness, its moral interpretation of sin, its joy in the Saviour, its peace with God, its loving self-sacrifice. With this experience it has inoculated the thinking of the East. These are net results of the West in the East as an evangelizing power.

Yet it is impossible to be satisfied with them or to feel that the mere maintenance of these influences by Europeans in the East is synonymous with the Christianization of the world. And for this reason. The missionary work of the Western Church in the Orient, must be, in the nature of the case, at first a reproduction of herself in the lands whither she goes on her Christian errand. Churches

carry their messages abroad in the terms and under the forms which they themselves understand, believe and practise. This is natural, and, for economic and practical reasons, it may be necessary. The primary work of missions in the East could not, doubtless, have been done otherwise than as it has been done. A church must work through its existing agencies, and if those agencies be sectarian, the sectarian differentiations must reflect themselves in the mission establishments. The inevitable immediate result is the appearance in the Orient of sectarian lines that have no necessary relation to the East; that commemorate only the local history of the West; that are separable in thought and in fact from the essence of Christianity; that had no existence in the day when Christ, filled with the cosmic vision, sent forth apostles to gather disciples for Himself and to baptize them into His Name.

It is evident that the presentation in the East of certain specialized and sectarian forms of Christianity held by sections of the West, and the Christianization of the world,

as Christ construed it, are distinct propositions of unequal authority and scope. Yet they are not in conflict with each other. The first—sectarian missions—stands towards the second,—world-Christianization—as John the Baptist stood towards Christ. John entered upon his ministry to prepare in the desert of Israel a highway for Christ. In discharging this duty he made no attempt to conceal his personal convictions regarding life. By choice and training John was an ascetic; and, while fulfilling his mission, he practised his asceticism openly; a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat locusts and wild honey. But he did not seek to commit Christ to his asceticism and Christ was not, in fact, committed to it. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking."[1] John's function was to prepare the public mind for Christ, to direct the public mind to Christ and then to let Christ mould the public mind as He would. When John had said "Behold the Lamb of God"[2] so distinctly that men understood and saw and followed Christ, John's

[1] Matt. 11 : 19. [2] John 1 : 29.

work had fulfilled itself. Henceforth he said: "He must increase, I must decrease."[1]

Such is the relation of denominational missions to the Christianization of the world. They are the forerunners of Christ and only that. They do not renounce their personal convictions in theology and churchmanship; they speak in the terms, and work through the forms, which tradition or choice have made severally their own. But their function in the East rests not in the terms of a theology which may be meaningless for Eastern minds, nor in forms of worship which may or may not satisfy the Oriental sense of devotion—their function is to clear through the jungle a highway for the Prince of Peace; to point bewildered seekers to the Lamb of God; to win disciples to the Heavenly Master; to bind them to Him in the sacramental bond; to teach them to understand and love His words—and then to let Christ evolve His own disciples throughout the East and build up His own Church in the Orient, in doctrine and worship, as He will.

[1] John 3: 30.

For a moment this may seem to be a revolutionary position, the effect of which, should it prevail, would mean confusion in the East and a relapse into superstition. But reflection will show that what is advocated is that which for every Anglo-Saxon is most precious: liberty of mind and conscience in doctrine and worship. There was a time (never let it be forgotten) when England and Scotland, the lands of our forefathers, were ignorant of Christ; when our ancestors were members of the non-Christianized world. The charming chronicles of Montalembert tell us of those Monks of the West who came with the message to us—uttering it in the terms of their own theology and representing it under the forms of their own Roman worship —and earlier than they may have been those Culdee evangelists who brought Greek liturgies and Greek theologies through France to Ireland, and through Ireland into the fastnesses of the Scottish highlands. For us, through our forefathers, these were the men who said "Behold the Lamb of God." These were the men who planted in our Aryan life

a faith that came to the world through Semitic channels and in the garb of Oriental personality. We felt not bound to accept their theology, or to practice their liturgy. Receiving the essence through them—and through them attaining Christian self-consciousness, we reserved our freedom touching all beside. Christ, by His Spirit, has formed us—giving us the knowledge and experience of Himself. In Him is our only unity, for in theology and churchmanship we have followed many paths, in the exercise of personal liberty.

The time has come—or, if it be not here is not far distant, when the East, in its most advanced nations and communities is beginning to attain Christian self-consciousness, through the lives of many leading members of these races who now represent the second and third generations of Christians. I have met in the East native Christians as mature and balanced in the spiritual life as any whom I have known in the West, and I have met many persons of high intelligence, outside of Christianity, familiar with Christian

thought. This fact introduces a new era in the Christianization of the world—and opens new questions for consideration by the churches of the West. Hitherto the single end has been primary evangelization—the introduction to Eastern nations of the elementary Christian ideas. In the less advanced nations and communities this must for a long time continue to be the urgent work. And for all such work sectarian missions are available, and Western theologies and polities offer no hindrance to effective service.

But we must face the fact that the East, from whom Christ so long has been veiled, now begins to see Him, and, seeing Him, begins to claim her right to be developed in Christian self-consciousness and Christian self-expression, without theological or ecclesiastical dictation from the West. This fact appears in relative degrees of distinctness in the various communities of the East; pre-eminently in Japan, the most advanced and most open-minded of them all. The most open-minded and statesmanlike of our mis-

sionaries perceive the fact, welcome it, and anticipate its results. These are the words of Dr. Pettie of Okayama: "The present is a period of change and recasting. Just what form our mission work will assume in days to come it were rash to prophesy, but that great changes are about taking place and that we have reached an end of what may be termed the first full period of foreign missionary service for Japan is, in varying degrees, the conviction of a large number of our mission circle. Foreign help will be needed and welcomed for many years to come. The personal service of strong character, resolute conviction, and loving ministration will still find a place here as elsewhere, but the old-time idea of *foreign* missionary service, with extra-territorial jurisdiction, accountability to foreign boards and the insistance on foreign methods of thought and activity will prove less and less acceptable and profitable."

There is reason to believe that this view is not at present entertained by all missionaries abroad nor by all missionary organizations at home. There are those, at home and abroad,

whose only conception of the Christianization of the world implies the organizing of the religious life of the East upon western platforms of theology and within western lines of polity; whose only outlook for the future is to keep the East as a child under religious and ecclesiastical tutors and governors sent out from England and America, which are assumed to be the territorial seat of authority in religion. For a short time to come, in the most mature religious communities of the East, and for a longer period in regions less mature, this policy of western control may continue and may be tolerated. But its indefinite continuance is not a matter of choice with the missionary organizations of the West. The inherent vitality of the Christianized element in Oriental life will assert itself and will determine for itself its theology, its worship and its mode of government; even as, in time past in the West, when the exotic plant of Christianity, introduced from the East, had rooted itself in the life and acclimated itself to the mental atmosphere of Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon races, it brought

forth its appropriate fruitage of dogmatic and liturgical institutions. The time draws near when the West no longer may dictate terms of conformity to the religious thinking of Japan and India. The gradual supersession of missions by indigenous Christianity in the chief centres of thought will occur. The future of missions in countries that have attained religious self-consciousness must more and more take on the aspects of a cooperating, rather than controlling, force. And if, in centres of power, this modification of policy is resisted, the East increasingly will withdraw herself from mission organizations and pursue independently her course of religious self-development. Instead of resenting this we should rejoice in it, and do all in our power to foster it as the verification of Oriental religious experience, and the seal of God upon the labours of our missionaries. Does not a wise father rejoice, if he sees his son, to whom he imparted the primary counsels of life, attaining self-knowledge and self-dependence and the courage of the initiative? Would he wish to keep that boy

always a mere reflector of his own thought? Does he not rejoice to see the boy thinking for himself and living his way into his own life? And shall we not rejoice if, one by one, communities of the East shall attain Christian self-consciousness and meet their own questions in their own way? Does it not prove that the seed planted was a living seed and not the mere husk of foreign dogma and foreign sectarianism? I believe that the larger East, with its enormous expanse and population, never shall be Christianized through the immediate agency of western denominational missions. Out of the influences thus set in motion, out of the ground thus prepared, must spring leaders in the native community, bound to it by the tie of ancestral connection and able to speak to it as no western voice, nor even the wisest and the tenderest, ever has spoken, or ever can speak.

These thoughts are but part of a system of thinking that affects every question connected with our religion at home as well as abroad. Whatever legitimately works for the mini-

mizing of sectarianism, works for a clearer conception of the common essence of Christian truth, and the common centre of Christian life—Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Solicitude to make much of sectarian distinctions often springs from a sincere dread that unless these distinctions be emphasized the truth may suffer by impairment. But if the signs of the present time at home and abroad may be trusted, less and less shall there be of this solicitude. We shall come to see that wherever the common essence consciously is shared, the individualistic interpretations of that essence subordinate themselves into mere psychological conveniences, good for those who use them respectively, but without universal validity or universal authority. Hence the value and meaning of institutions where the essence is viewed apart from any and all sectarian interpretations, where equal hospitality is given to all sectarian interpretations and to all modes of ecclesiastical procedure. In proportion as every such institution has wisdom and influence it becomes a point of departure,

whence, as from an inn at the mountain's base, a path strikes upward through the jungles of the foothills, to the broad, clear reaches of the upper levels, where one sees, as in the unity of a landscape, the world-relations of truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

It is from this higher point of view that I have attempted to speak of that which must be an object of holy hope and desire to every true Christian—the Christianization of the world. I have sought to show that that phrase implies something other and more simple than the competition of Western sects to reproduce themselves in the East. It implies something that carries the mind far beyond that desirable advance in missionary polity known as interdenominational comity, which means to substitute for competition the partitioning of the East into denominational spheres of influence, after the example of the powers of Europe in China and in Africa. This is not the Christianization of the world. This is the occupation of the East by the religious organizations of the West as a preliminary and temporary measure. The words of our

theme challenge us to measure up to the cosmopolitanism of Christ, for whom there were no sects, no ecclesiastical polities, no dogmatic systems—only a world to be brought to Him, and He, the Living Truth, to be brought to that world: a world groaning and travailing, wandering and groping, searching, and, in a million idol temples, praying for the knowledge of God. "I am the Light of the world. He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life. . . . Ye, My Church, shall be My witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth."[1]

If we are prepared to take this position, then the Christianization of the Orient, which would complete the Christianization of the world, becomes a thought that kindles with brilliant and prophetic suggestions. It suggests the consummation of the hopes and yearnings of the non-Christian faiths through the absolute revelation of God in Christ Jesus. It suggests the development of an Oriental

[1] Cf. John 8: 12; John 14: 9; Acts 1: 8.

type of Christianity wherein the common essence shall localize itself in terms of thought and modes of practice adapted to the Eastern conception of life. It suggests a more complete and full orbed interpretation of Christianity for the world, when the East shall supplement and fulfill the West by contributing truth seen from her point of view; mediated through her experience.

When one stands in the heart of the venerable East; feels the atmosphere charged with religious impulse; reads on the faces of the people marks of the unsatisfied soul; considers the monumental expressions of the religious idea in grand and enduring architectural forms, then the suggestion that all this means nothing—that it bears no witness to the Divine in man seeking and finding a partial and inadequate self-fulfillment—that it is but to be stamped out and exterminated before Christianity can rise upon its ruins—becomes an unthinkable suggestion. I look with reverence upon the hopes and yearnings of non-Christian faiths, believing them to contain flickering and broken lights of God,

which shall be purged and purified and consummated through the absolute self-revelation of the Father in Christ Incarnate. With him whose provincialism was chastened by the vision let down from heaven I believe that God is no respecter of persons,[1] that in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him; and that in the company of His saints are many who have been cleansed in the Blood of Christ's Cross and prepared for the vision of Christ's face by grace that led them in a way that they knew not, through the shadows of an ethnic faith. The Christianization of the world suggests, then, the conservation of all that is true in the non-Christian faiths and its purgation, reconstruction and consummation in the fullness that is in Christ Jesus.

The Christianization of the world suggests also the development of an Oriental type of Christianity, wherein the common essence shall localize itself in terms of thought and modes of practice adapted to the Eastern conception of life. The evolutionary changes of

[1] Cf. Acts 10: 34, 35.

theological opinion in the West, taking place at intervals through the last four hundred years, and the lack of ecclesiastical agreement, must admonish us against supposing that we can, or that we should, impose upon the East our variable theological tests or our complicated ecclesiastical requirements. The preliminary introduction of the Christian essence we could indeed accomplish under our sectarian forms; but the living seed, once rooted and germinated, we must commit to the culture of the Spirit. The East must evolve her own theological standards as the West has done, assimilating those of the West if she will, but not having them laid upon her by authority. And nothing is more certain than that the common essence of Christianity lends itself to expression in the terms of the East. Our Lord Himself was an Oriental, and no imagination can picture Him, without violence to the sense of truth, except in the garb and manner of the East. Christianity would have overspread the East ere now had it not been forced upon the East in unwelcome identification with

the manners and customs and temperaments and dogmas and military governments of an alien and inexplicable West.

Finally, the Christianization of the world suggests a more complete and full-orbed interpretation of Christianity for the world, when the East shall supplement and fulfill the West by contributing truth seen from her point of view; mediated through her experience. Much could I say of the possibilities opened by this thought, but all that I would say at this point may be indicated in words that I uttered two years ago in the imperial city of Tokyo, and which I had spoken many times previously in the presence of thousands of Hindu, Mohammedan and Buddhist university-students in every quarter of India, from Madras to the Panjab. I rejoice to repeat the words once more in this Christian audience of the West.

"When I permit myself to contemplate the blessing that would come to the Western World if the great, religious East were to become the teacher and the interpreter of the religion of Jesus Christ, my heart burns

within me. Again and again, in the course of these Lectures, I have reiterated my conviction that the Christianity of the West has been in many ways an inadequate and imperfect illustration of the uncorrupted essence of the faith of Christ. It is not to us that the East should look for an example of what the power of Christ can effect in the redeeming and sanctifying of nations. All that the West has of moral strength and social purity and spiritual power it owes to Jesus Christ. But evil is mingled with its good and darkness with its light. Not to us, but to Him, shall the far-seeing eyes of the East look, when the educated circles of the Orient are prepared seriously to consider the relation of Christianity to the future of the world. Not from us, but from Him, and from His Holy Scriptures of truth, shall the deep spiritual insight of the East receive the revelation that shall be incorporated with her own traditions and assimilated into her own institutions.

"In the day when the vigour of the West and the insight of the East shall be joined by a true union of hearts for the interpreta-

tion and practice of the faith of Jesus Christ, then, and not till then, shall the Unspeakable Gift of God, be understood, appreciated and expressed on earth." [1]

[1] *Christian Belief Interpreted by Christian Experience;* Barrow's Lectures, pp. 246, 247, Chicago and London, 1905.

LECTURE II

THE BEARING OF SECTARIAN MOVEMENTS UPON THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE WORLD

LECTURE II

THE BEARING OF SECTARIAN MOVEMENTS UPON THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE WORLD

TO the observer of world-movements in the light of contemporary religion, aspects of extraordinary interest appear in the present ecclesiastical situation. Certain of these aspects are the following: alleged decline in the number of suitable candidates for the ministry; growing repugnance, on the part of ministers and laymen, to old forms of denominational subscription; criticism of the Church for inefficiency and lack of vision; movements of life and love developing outside of the Church. The importance of these phenomena cannot be denied. They challenge attention and invite explanation. It is possible to consider them judicially; without hostility and also without favour. Apparently the Protestant Church in this country, at the present time, is unable

to attract to her ministry an adequate supply of men of the highest order. Some are coming; more, in certain quarters, are being attracted than came ten years ago. But, considering the number of men of unusual promise now being educated in American universities and colleges, the proportion of those undertaking the Christian ministry is sub-normal. Apparently, also, in the circle of the educated laity and of the ministry, is spreading a feeling of repugnance towards historic forms of denominational subscription; this feeling frequently coincides with piety and usefulness and with desire to preserve the integrity of the Apostolic deposit. Criticism of the Church increases; from within more than from without. Her foes are of her own household. They accuse the Church of blindness in the presence of opportunity; of slowness of heart to discern the signs of the times; of sins of the letter against the spirit; of sterile conformity to obsolete conditions. Meantime, movements of life and love abound, non-ecclesiastical; extra-ecclesiastical; movements that ask no permission to be, that offer

homage to no authority but Christ, that interest many who once worked for and within the Church. It is one thing to observe these phenomena. It is another to interpret them with precision. Some, pronouncing upon these phenomena, without having regard to their evolutionary bearing, affirm that the decline in the number of suitable candidates for the ministry means the passing of the ministry from its ancient seat of authority in moral and religious development; that the lay and ministerial repugnance to denominational subscription means the passing of the credal function in favour of a non-theological religion of the Spirit; that the dissatisfaction within the Church means the passing of the ecclesiastical idea as an outworn and outgrown conception, which, henceforth, must give place to spontaneous forces of righteousness, disburdened of clerical tradition.

To those who look below the surface, and consider the evolutionary elements active from the beginning in the Christian religion, these disturbing aspects of the present time do not portend the decay of the ministry, the

dissolution of the rule of faith, the superannuation of the Church. They point rather to an imperative and as yet dimly apprehended need of large readjustments in religious and ecclesiastical thinking; readjustments which, if they be made generally and generously, will bring an apostolic zest into modern Christianity, and reclothe the Church with the strength and love of the first days. It is the function of the present Lectures to deal somewhat with these readjustments; discerning their nature, estimating their power. This estimate is undertaken in a spirit absolved from all radical bias and revolutionary tendency; a spirit of humility, of reverence for the Church as an historic entity born in the mind of Christ, sealed with the Blood of His Sacrifice, endued with gifts of ministry, fortified by the communion of the Holy Ghost.

For those who revere and love the Church it is profitable to remember that its history is the history of a series of reinterpretations of an idea which in its absolute perfection existed only in the thought and purpose of

Christ. Christ's conception of the Church was the perfect conception. Every successive reinterpretation of His idea has been, under the necessity of the case, more or less limited and imperfect by reason of man's infirmity and lack of vision. And because the reinterpretations of the idea have been more or less imperfect they have been more or less transitory, more or less local, more or less tending to spend their force and give place to other reinterpretations larger, more adequate, more commensurate with the idea in the mind of the Founder.

One does not forget that modern criticism has raised the question whether there was in the mind of our Lord the intention to found a church. It has been contended that Christ wrought for individuals, that He related Himself to men as separate persons; that He placed Himself at the head of no organization; that the Church emerged from the age subsequent to Christ, and from other conditions, the most prominent of which was His absence. Much may be said in support of this contention. The ministry of our Lord

was signally a ministry to persons. He saw and proclaimed the value of personal life. "What shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"[1] The blind, the demoniac, the poor, the perplexed, the inquiring, the child, even the dead meant much to Him, and upon each He gave forth the fullness of His power, wisdom and love. His Sacrifice upon the Cross, while by His own statement a giving of His life for the life of the world, was instantly apprehended by Christian experience as personal in its significance. That greatest of churchmen, St. Paul, with his passion for organization, sees the personal bearing of the Lord's Death and says: "The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me."[2] Nor can anything be more evident than that the mind and word of the Lord Jesus suggest nothing of the subsequent developments of the Church along certain prominent lines. One looks in vain to Christ for the foreshadowing of Catholic supremacy with its

[1] Matt. 16: 26. [2] Gal. 2: 20.

temporal power and its sacerdotal authority. Equally in vain does one look to Christ for the justification of sectarian rivalries and persecutions. In these things He had no interest; they were foreign to His spirit; they entered not into His world-view. We must fear that numberless acts of the Church merit only rebuke and condemnation from Him in whose name, as the Founder of the Church, those acts were done.

Yet He was the Founder of the Church. The idea of the Christian Church and of its function in the world was born in the soul of the Son of God. When Israel, the Messianic nation, failed to rise at His bidding, He entered upon His ministry in the power of the Eternal Spirit with one magnificent end in view, to accomplish the Father's will on earth as it is in heaven: to bring in the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God was to be the kingdom of heaven on earth; the reconstruction of the world according to the eternal purpose of the Father; the transformation of human life in its motives, practices, and relationships; the overthrow of in-

iquity; the defeat of untruth; the curing of abuses; the recovery of sight to the blind, the opening of the prison doors of ignorance, fear, sin, shame; the ethical and social emancipation of the entire family of man. As the Messiah of prophecy He came, in the fullness of time, to Israel the chosen servant-nation of Jehovah. With the word of the kingdom on His lips, with the fire of Messianic expectation in His heart, He summoned the Messianic nation to its world-service for the Kingdom of God's sake, and His summons fell unheeded to the ground. "He came unto His own and they that were His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born not of blood (kinship in the blood of Israel was not necessary for this new sonship) nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."[1] There was the nucleus of the Christian Church. It was made up of as many as received Him, of as many as discerned in Him the Christ, the

[1] John 1: 11–13.

Anointed One, the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. The nation as a nation answered not His call. So, out from the nation He gathered a group of kindred spirits, unified by their common discernment of His Messiahship; and on the fact of their common discernment of His Messiahship, as on a rock, He built His Church, the instrument by which, as the ages advance He is achieving the purpose of His Advent, the redemption of the world from its long alienation, to the righteousness, the peace, the joy of the Kingdom of God. To that Church He gave no organization at first. He gave what was better than organization; He gave Himself. He admitted that group into the confidence of His soul; He imparted to it His ideals; He infused it with His spirit; He introduced it into the fellowship of His sufferings; at last in the supreme act of obedience to the will of the Father, obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross, He "purchased" the Church (to use the words of one afterwards admitted to the Apostolic nucleus), He identified it with Himself and with the

ideals of the Kingdom of God, He made it His own, "with His own precious Blood." [1]

So long as the daily companionship with the adorable Master continued, there was little corporate self-consciousness in the apostolic nucleus. Its members realized themselves chiefly not as parts of a Church having life and entity in itself, but as disciples and friends of Christ. The first distinct intimations of an organic relationship among themselves, to continue and perpetuate itself when the central Presence was withdrawn, came in the memorable hours preceding the arrest and trial of the Master. Not until after the Resurrection were those intimations fully understood. The last words before the Ascension were definite. Tentatively they had asked if the Messianic nation was, even now, at the eleventh hour, to be accepted as the instrument whereby the Kingdom of God shall be brought in upon earth: "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Gravely He turns the question aside: "It is not for you to know,"

[1] Cf. Acts 20: 28.

and plainly imposes on His Church the Messianic mission forfeited by Israel: "*Ye* shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem (the citadel of Judaism) and in all Judæa and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth."[1] "I send forth the promise of My Father *upon you*."[2] Knit together by the solemnity of their present situation, confirmed in the sense of corporate life and function by the unparalleled spiritual experience of the day of Pentecost, the apostolic nucleus attained self-realization as the Church of the *Christos*, the Anointed One, the Messiah; as the chosen witness of the Risen Lord; as the evangelist of the kingdom of God unto all the nations.

Life, within that organized circle, began in simplicity. To outward appearance the Church of the Anointed One was but an unassuming sect of mystics hidden beneath the imposing structure of Jewish ecclesiasticism. Seriousness and the vital fear of God brooded on every soul; love, born of common experiences and hopes, brought unwonted unity.

[1] Cf. Acts 1: 6, 7, 8. [2] Luke 24: 29.

"All that believed were together and had all things common."[1] "And, day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."[2]

It was not long before the expansive principle within the Church of Christ asserted itself. The hidden sect emerged. The differentia of Christianity began to appear. The new order proceeded to extricate itself from the old. One memorandum of splendid brevity interprets the situation: "The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."[3] The necessity for organization demonstrated itself to the apostles even before St. Paul, the great churchman, laid his hand upon the helm; it commended itself to the whole multitude of believers as rational and in accord with the mind of Christ. The appointment of the deacons, the distribution

[1] Acts 2: 44. [2] Acts 2: 46, 47. [3] Acts 6: 7.

of functions, that neither the preaching of the word nor the ordering of affairs should be neglected, was the first attempt at reinterpretation of the idea of the Church as it lay in the mind of Him who, as preacher, "spake as never man spake";[1] as minister of affairs, "went about doing good."[2]

When the statesmanlike genius of St. Paul was consecrated and placed at Christ's disposal, another reinterpretation of the idea of the Church transpired. It occurred as the necessary correlate of St. Paul's world-view. St. Paul, by birth and training a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee, a liturgist, a zealot, was by temperament and outlook a citizen of the world. Never was he disloyal to his own nation. His heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was that they might be saved.[3] Nevertheless the precincts of the temple were too strait for him. The tithing of mint and anise and cumin were matters of no more weight to him than to his Master. The cosmopolitan spirit speaks in his words at

[1] Cf. John 7: 47. [2] Cf. Acts 10: 38.
[3] Cf. Acts 10: 1.

Antioch: "Lo! we turn to the Gentiles!"[1] It was cosmopolitanism refined by the Messianic tenderness of the Lord Jesus. The travail and groaning of creation smote upon Paul's soul; the sorrow, disorder, wickedness of the world afflicted him as with the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; the salvation of men became his passion; he would become all things to all men, if by any means he might save some. He received his calling and ordination in terms that exactly corresponded with his temperament. "He is a chosen vessel unto Me;" (so is it said in the vision of Ananias,) "To bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel."[2] Never was leader more evidently chosen for a task in view. No longer was the Church to hide like an esoteric sect in the shadow of the temple. "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners," it was to advance into the world as the herald of the Kingdom of God. St. Paul was its providential leader; the most cosmopolitan of churchmen. His policy of

[1] Acts 13: 46. [2] Acts 9: 15.

administration, wrought out in the communion of the Spirit, related itself in majestic simplicity to the work to be done. That work was the Christianization of the world. In the mind of St. Paul this work might best be done through an undivided Church forever expanding its sphere of influence, and always continuing under the direction and oversight of a central authority. "One Lord; one faith; one baptism."[1] Not as one claiming papal jurisdiction, but as one accepting a God-given burden he undertook the care of all the Churches. Absolutely without the secular ambitions and imperialistic hauteur of the popes, a penitent to the last, judging himself to be the chief of sinners, nevertheless in his sense of vocation to lead and govern an undivided Church he esteemed himself a very vicar of Christ, speaking the wisdom of God in a mystery. To him, forecasting the Church's future, there were two evils to be guarded against: the evil of sectarian movements, the evil of theological variation from a rule of faith. Sectarian

[1] Cf. Eph. 4: 5.

movements seemed to him wounds inflicted on the body of Christ. He pleaded against them: "I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"[1] He felt that sectarian movements were incompatible with the ideal of a Church as he conceived it. He spoke of himself as a wise masterbuilder[2] who, by the grace of God given unto him had laid a foundation on which others were to build. To introduce sectarian elements into the Church was to introduce material as alien and as base as wood, hay or stubble into the holy structure, a course which must not only

[1] 1 Cor. 1: 10–13. [2] 1 Cor. 3: 10.

mar its homogeneous beauty, but eventuate in the destruction of the temple of God.

Not less grievous, in his judgment, was the evil of theological variation from a rule of faith. He esteemed himself the depositary of a God-given message. "I make known to you, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." [1]

With such a view of the source of his own authority, it is no surprise to hear his passionate protest against theological variation: "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from Him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel; only there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." [2]

The historical significance of these convic-

[1] Gal. 1: 11. [2] Gal. 1: 6–8

tions of the great churchman, Paul, is very striking. They appear to contain the germs of the Catholic movement. They represent ecclesiastical and theological uniformity as the necessary qualification of the Church of Christ, in view of her appointment as custodian of the faith and witness to the Resurrection of the Son of God. For an unprejudiced mind it is not difficult to admit the reasonableness of the claim that apostolic sanction rests on the Catholic conception of the Church. Strictly homogeneous in polity; organized and administered from a central seat of power; professing and teaching a system of doctrine determined by authority, the *imprimatur* of the apostolate might, not without reason, when the brief period of the undivided Church ended, be claimed by those who ruled respectively as the vicegerents of God, from Rome, in the interest of ecclesiastical catholicity, from Constantinople, in the interest of the catholicity of theological belief.

The sense of historic justice should prevent the most ardent Protestant from denying the

connection between the Catholic movement and certain ideals of the Apostolic Age, especially the opposition to sectarianism and to theological individualism. The Catholic reinterpretation of the idea of the Church, though it presents aspects of secular ambition and of magisterial severity that seem alien to the mind of Christ, does represent in certain particulars the expansion and continuance of Pauline convictions enshrined in these majestic symbols of uniformity: "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." "One Body in Christ."[1] Nor should our love of the liberty of Protestantism make us blind to the place and function of Catholicism in the providential order of the evolution of Christianity. Humanly speaking there was no other way by which to safeguard the interests at stake during the ages of ignorance. The centralization of power under a monarchical episcopate, the military precision of organization, the enforcement of theological uniformity by external authority were bound, it may be, to generate abuses and to foster harmful beliefs;

[1] Cf. Eph. 4:5; Rom. 12:5.

forces which by the Catholic are grouped under the name of apostasy, and by many a Protestant deplored as the rending of the body of Christ. The liberalization of religious thinking is a practical synonym for the survival of Christian experience. Fidelity to truth as one sees it is the first law of this survival. When the Catholic movement undertook to define the data of Christian truth and to delimit the frontiers of Christian belief it undertook that which, apparently easy at first, and apparently permanent for a time, was bound at length to challenge the intellectual ethics of mankind. It is easy to construct the form of a dogma to be published by authority. It is curiously interesting to note upon what small, incidental action of individuals may depend the form of a dogma; upon the presence or absence of some person; upon the numerical chances of a vote; upon the current phraseology of the day. The dogma once framed and promulgated, time, which makes the angles of architecture glorious and venerable with masses of ivy, invests the statement, framed, it may be, by

the chances of a vote, with an atmosphere of positiveness or finality, which, so long as intellectual conditions remain passive, presents the appearance of absolute truth. But time, which glorifies architecture, also undermines it. For time is a force made up of changes, searching changes of atmosphere; rains that eat into crevices, winds that blow the dust of disintegration away, frosts that heave block from block. And time brings intellectual rebirth, as spring after winter; intellectual vision, as day after night; intellectual self-assertion, as manhood after infancy; and a Christian experience that is estopped by authority from expressing religious truth in the terms of intellectual reality is doomed to ethical decline. The characteristic interpretations of truth in the great Protestant sects, Presbyterian, Methodist, Independent, are, in their diversity, guarantees of the strong survival of Christian experience. "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." [1]

The distribution of authority is one of the

[1] Isa. 38: 16.

blessings of sectarianism. The ancient dream of a Catholic Church is the dream of a centralized authority, radiating its powers of control upon the whole world. It is an impressive conception. The institutional grandeur of the Roman Church witnesses to the impressiveness of the idea; the ethics of mediæval popes and the declining influence of the modern papacy over the intellectual life of the world witnesses to the fictitious nature of the idea of a central seat of human authority in matters of religion. One only ever trod this earth who could say: "All power is given unto Me"[1]—and that One was meek and lowly in heart, coming not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. The Protestant rejections of centralized authority in religion were prophecies of the spirit of democracy, which, in all life, grows with the growth of intellectual self-realization. As the mind of the race expands it outgrows, in religion, in civil government, in arts and letters certain impressions concerning the Divine rights of

[1] Matt. 28: 18.

kings, temporal or spiritual, which belong essentially to ages of submissive ignorance. This does not imply that respect for authority is inconsistent with intellectual liberty; but rather the reverse: the conception of authority, of its nature, its seat, its adequate representatives, its proper functions, advances to a higher plane, eliminates fictitious elements, minimizes the formal and the objective, to magnify that which is of the nature of intellectual and moral reality; by denying centralized authority, it advances to a higher and holier Catholicity.

The counteraction of erroneous accent is another of the blessings of sectarianism. It is common to hear deprecations, sorrowful or scornful, of the lack of theological consensus in Protestantism. Such opinions overlook the fact that this lack of consensus represents the salvation of religious thinking from disastrous specialization. Whatever merits may attach to the Catholic conception of a churchly rule of faith, are balanced by the inability of such a rule to do justice to the whole truth of a world-wide religion. In our

larger thinking concerning the Church of Christ as an institution for the Christianization of the world, Catholicism itself shrinks to the proportions of a sect, that properly accentuates such things as, to it, appear of primary value, but overlooks or denies other things, which, to minds differently constituted, are the major interests of Christianity. It is well for us to discriminate between the differentia of the Christian sects, and the common essence of the Christian religion. Dimly we are realizing the presence of a common essence; slowly that inestimable common essence is disclosing its universality before our eyes; wonderingly we are awaking to the potency of that common essence for the Christianization of the world. It is well for us to reflect that, but for the persistence of diversity in the sectarian emphasis on aspects of truth, that common essence which is to be the light of the world might have remained buried under the abnormal deposit of ecclesiastical specialization.

The humanizing of Christianity is one of the blessings of sectarianism. "Handle Me

and see," said Christ, "that it is I Myself."[1] As the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, so truth was given for man to handle, to study, to assimilate, to reincarnate under the forms of his own life and thinking. It is truth, reincarnated and reappearing in the varying forms of human experience, in the varying accents of human thinking that is the real extension of the Incarnation of the Son of God;—this, rather than the institutional authority of a Church defining truth in certain terms and imposing those terms upon the acceptance of the individual. And, apart from the sadness of that human infirmity whereby we tend to malign and to oppose what is not to our mind, it is most wholesome that men shall differ, each thereby being true to himself before God, and, after the manner of his own possibilities and necessities, so receiving Christ. It is sad that Thomas Arnold and John Henry Newman, both fellows of Oriel, supposed they had little in common in their religious experience, and spake harshly one of the

[1] Luke 24: 39.

other; yet doubtless it was needful for the humanity of each that each should be true to truth as he saw it; doubtless it was well for England that each should accent that which, but for the other, might have been overlooked; doubtless they are friends now, seeing eye to eye in the common room of a Greater University.

The indirect testimony to the universal is another blessing of sectarianism. If it had been possible for one set of men to legislate the form and content of religious thinking in a manner permanently adequate for all Christian experience, our conception of the vastness of the revelation of God in Christ would shrink. But this never has been possible. The successive theological reinterpretations have borne witness to the sincerity, and often to the insight, of those that framed them. For those who used them they have appeared to have a relative sufficiency. As presentments of Christian thought, and interpretations of revealed truth, they have been honoured of God and serviceable to man. But their noblest quality has been, not their rela-

tive adequacy, but their absolute inadequacy; not their direct witness to certain aspects impressing the minds of those who framed them, but their indirect witness, through their insufficiency for other minds, to the immensity of the scope of the manifestation to the world, of God in Christ. Had Europe slept in ignorance beneath the limited view of God and His universe that prevailed in the age of Hildebrand, and was not materially enlarged by the Council of Trent, one might conclude that Christianity is but an ethnic faith. But, with the rebirth of learning and the emancipation of thought, came the rolling back of clouds, the uncovering of landscapes, the multitudinous self-fulfillments of God; and the students of truth awoke; and every one had a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation;[1] and lo! the wideness of God's mercy was as the wideness of the sea—and the love of God was broader than the measure of man's mind.

It is with deep feeling that I make these observations upon the blessings that have

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. 14: 26.

come to the Church, and indirectly to the world, through the differentia of Protestantism. In the light of them one sees the broader justification of what has been called the Nonconformist conscience, the irrepressible force of dissent, the psychological impossibility of the surrender of intellectual independence, the eagerness and heat of sectarian championships. These things came not from beneath; they were not born of the spirit of perversity; they were not wanton disturbances of the peace of Christ's Church. They were means, in the hand of the Spirit, whereby larger life came to the body of Christ, whereby truth was vitalized in the thinking of individuals, and responsibility was recommitted to the believers.

If it be true that we have reached a point in the evolution of Christianity where the beneficence of sectarian movements can be apprehended, it is not less true that we are beginning to apprehend in our time the limitations inherent in those movements as means for the Christianization of the world. As one thinks of them in relation to the mind

of Christ an impression is left that they are but partial fulfillments of that for which He stands; that they are deficient as exponents of a world-religion. The inestimable services rendered by them, as avenues through which the liberty of Protestants escaped from mediæval authority, do not guarantee their adequacy in view of new intellectual and religious conditions apparently at hand. As they themselves were born in the travail of a great age of religious emancipation, so it may be that they shall give place to some yet more magnificent reinterpretation of the ideal of Christ, born in the travail of the momentous time that lies before us. This is not inherently impossible, nor is the possibility in any sense one from which the lover of Christ, of the truth and of the world should turn away. Usage, tradition, local association, temperament endear our inheritances to us, and our denominational inheritances are to many inexpressibly dear. Yet he who thinks on world problems with a mind exempt from prejudice feels involuntarily the limitations that beset the sectarian differentia of Protes-

tantism, as vehicles for the embodiment of truth, that knows neither Jew nor Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but is the common evangel of God to the common life of the race. One reflects how many of these sectarian differentia owe their origin to the factitious power of remote individuals operating at crucial moments in a distant past; how the atmosphere of authority has gathered about them with distance; how the inertia of denominational opinion may have been transmitted through generations, while the occasion for the survival of that opinion may have passed away; how the rivalry of sects may exhaust the dynamic of original convictions and persist only by the aid of hereditary tendency.

As the result of such reflections, there appears before the mind the possibility that sectarian movements may be but a transitional aspect, an evolutionary phase of Christianity, not a fixed, necessary, final condition. It is at first startling to admit the hypothesis that these systems of post-Reformation thinking may not be final forms of Christianity;

that, having wrought magnificently for the vindication of Protestant liberty, they may have their day and pass away, giving place to a greater reinterpretation. Yet the strangeness of the thought does not impair its reasonableness. These sectarian systems are relatively modern and relatively local; they have no special warrant of Christ to sustain them; many of them sprang from episodes in European history involving no necessary world-relation, conferring no special world-credential. Our Western genius for organization, our sectarian nomenclature, our responsiveness to ancestral custom have engaged energy, pride, love on behalf of these systems. But it may be that we have read into them an undue importance and have imputed to them an unauthorized permanence. It may be that the unsatisfactory conditions besetting the churches at many points to-day are prophetic of the passing of our sects and the reincarnation of the Church of the Living God in forms of fresh adaptation to fresh and incalculable opportunity. Who can doubt God's power to

sweep away our sects and reorganize according to some larger norm of life His Holy Church! Who can question that such a reorganization, while it might displace precious associations and disturb settled practices, might also remove grave hindrances and formidable embarrassments. The *impasse* existing in England by reason of Nonconformist resistance of parliamentary legislation in the interest of Anglican education; the present arrest of development in the religious life of Scotland by reason of technicalities in a trust deed given sixty years ago, suggest the possibility that the age of fallowness and disintegration has come to institutions that have served their time and are ready to vanish away. Assuredly the ongoing of the Spirit and the Truth is not to be holden by parliamentary decisions. God may have in His plan not the disestablishment of the Church of England only, but that larger disestablishment of the whole sectarian principle which implies reorganization on simpler lines of service, faith and love.

With the greatest reverence I put these

thoughts into words; they spring from no revolutionary instinct, nor from any unseemly resistance of the disabilities of the present. They spring from observation of facts and from reflection upon their import. The facts of our time, bearing upon this question, are very striking, whatever may be their real significance. If we eliminate professional sectarian agitators and examine the thinking of the laity and of the rank and file of the clergy, polemical sectarianism must be described as a waning interest, an expiring fire. He who gives his energies to fanning this fire commonly is spoken of in terms of regret, as one misguided in his effort. The swords that have not yet become ploughshares for the field of truth, the spears that are not yet bent into pruning-hooks of social helpfulness. are esteemed by many regrettable survivals of a yesterday of ecclesiastical militarism. In circles of culture there is coming a truer sense of proportion touching the legitimate functions of the Church of Jesus Christ, in view of the charge committed to her by her Head; in view of the demand upon her

from the larger interests of the Kingdom of God; in view of the modified and momentous condition of the world. Under the influence of this truer sense of proportion vast numbers of men and women are conscious of deepening impatience in the presence of secondary barriers. Undeveloped conceptions of unity are in the air, moving freely as on the wings of eagles, unconsciously or indifferently ignoring formal lines of division beneath. Meantime the advancing philosophy of religion, the enriching discoveries of history and archeology, the pressure of social problems, the new cosmopolitanism, and, above all, the constructive results of Biblical criticism are bringing together many of the best minds and of the most consecrated souls upon a platform of Christian belief and effort incompatible with aggressive sectarianism, and independent of denominational subdivision. It would be vain to estimate the extent of this nucleus of unorganized sentiment within the Church of the present day; vain to make a calculation of the number of those for whom the denominational aspects of the

Church are already dim, as the outlines of a receding coast, and on the horizon line of whose hope is rising the image of a more glorious and more homogeneous Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; a Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone. The tenor of this sentiment is not revolutionary but evolutionary; not destructive but constructive; not the pulling down of noble walls of conviction, and the upheaval of deep foundations of belief, laid by holy hands of Protestantism; but the carrying up of that building of God to heights more royal, on lines more simple, that the glory of the latter house may crown the former. As we cannot estimate the extent of this unorganized sentiment which we believe to be enormous, in favour of a more homogeneous and simpler Christianity, neither can we forecast the form and manner of its development. The present situation is perplexing, indeterminate, unsatisfying. Sectarianism as such

may be a waning interest, but on the other hand the scientific theology of the present day is by no means adequate or final, as a substitute for scholastic theology. It sets its accent too exclusively on Jesus the teacher, on Jesus the idealist, not sufficiently on Christ the Saviour, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The contributions of the scientific theology are of value inestimable, but as yet their scope is too narrow, their depth too unequal. We wait for more —and that more must come from the field of apostolic Christology. The larger proportion of unorganized sentiment yearning for a reinterpretation of the Church on non-sectarian lines can crystallize around one axis only—the Cross of the Redeemer. Give that and all else is given. Give that, and all are one, in Him. This crystallizing of unorganized sentiment into a reinterpretation of the Church on non-sectarian lines would be, not a new ecclesiastical unity—not a new dogmatic unity—that were but to impose a new Catholicism, to revive the dream of an external seat of human authority, to give the

stone of death for the bread of life. The next great reinterpretation of the Church must be through the centralizing power of the Eternal Truth lifted up and drawing all men unto itself, with the vitalizing power of the Eternal Spirit giving liberty unto every man.

Through such a Church the Christianization of the world becomes possible, if not immediate. The witness of such a Church would be an irresistible witness. The effect of such a Church would be the advent and fruition of the Kingdom of God.

LECTURE III

THE RECOVERY OF THE APOSTOLIC THEOLOGY

LECTURE III

THE RECOVERY OF THE APOSTOLIC THEOLOGY

THE last lecture closed with allusion to a nucleus of unorganized sentiment now existing in the Church, for which the denominational aspects of Christianity, as such, are a waning interest; and in which the growing hope exists of a more homogeneous Church, yet to be: a reinterpretation on non-sectarian lines. An extended consideration of this sentiment is necessary, at the present stage of the argument.

The existence of this sentiment is a matter of fact, supported by various and interesting forms of evidence. The tone of preaching is changing. Fainter and less frequent is the note of polemical bitterness. Smaller grow the areas within which survives the zeal to do God service by vilifying from Christian pulpits the beliefs and practices of others. In

the broad currents of public thought, the educated pulpit is one of the sure indicators of religious tendency, and it is becoming more and more rare to hear an intelligent ambassador for Christ attempt to commend the excellence of his own sect by attacking the faults of another. By common consent the homiletical consciousness of the age concerns itself primarily with matters of effort and faith involving essential and general, rather than specialized and local, aspects of Christianity. That this changed tone of preaching indicates, in all cases, a diminishing estimate of the importance of sectarianism may not be a safe inference; yet, without doubt, it shows that other interests are taking its place. The nature of those other interests we may consider, later. They are products of the religious thinking of sixty years, in England and America. They represent advances in theism, in historical and practical theology, in social ethics, which leave, relatively meaningless, denominational issues that were sharp and vital at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The tone of lay thinking is changing. It is reflecting the influence exercised over their generation by a few men who have spoken with the authority of scholars and the devoutness of true believers, and whose books have been widely read. These were men who assumed, without debate, that the mind of the age is ready for larger questions than those involved in sectarianism and who received instant response from the educated lay-consciousness. It is not claimed that this response is unanimous. Large sections of the laity have not assimilated the essential results of devout theological reconstructions. Some have opposed them without discrimination, as defections from the rule of faith. Others, content with formal orthodoxy, have parried the incisive advances of thought with the shield of sectarian conservatism. But the educated laity has shown even greater inclination than the ministry towards the simplifying of theology; and greater readiness to exchange sectarian rivalry for practical catholicity. With something like intuitional accuracy, strong laymen of all Churches are

in advance of the clergy in separating the wheat of essential Christianity from the chaff of ecclesiasticism. It may be questioned whether sectarian agitation can long survive the disapproval of an intelligent, disinterested laity.

Mention should be made, also, of the buoyancy and effectiveness of extra-ecclesiastical religious movements, during the last half-century. While historical research and philosophical reconstruction have been redistributing the data of Christian belief, accomplishing, apparently without design, the scientific effacement of many sectarian distinctions, a spirit of Christlike love and sagacity has worked to the same end, in the interest of practical helpfulness and vital religion. Unauthorized by any ecclesiastical tribunal, yet abounding in apostolic energy, successive movements of high social significance have illustrated the eternal presence in the Christian religion of those sympathetic forces that made our Lord Jesus Christ a Friend and a Brother rather than a Churchman. The impressive development of Chris-

tian Associations for men and for women is an example of this. This movement has been in no sense hostile to the Church nor impatient of its denominational subdivisions. But, with singular simplicity, it has planted itself on that in Christian experience which is universal; reinterpreting that universal in terms that disarm antagonism and win the confidence even of non-Christian nations. The latest of these extra-ecclesiastical movements is the Religious Education Association. Whatever its future may be, the interesting history of its beginning shows that an age has come when men having at heart the welfare of the world cannot be separated by denominational barriers.

These are examples of evidence, easily obtainable, showing the existence of a large nucleus of unorganized sentiment favouring a more homogeneous interpretation of the Church. The prevailing temper of this sentiment is no less interesting. It is, distinctly, a non-revolutionary temper, not lending itself to radicalism; bringing no railing accusation against the intricate and troublous history of

sectarianism. On the contrary, it reveres the denominational tradition, as a witness to the intellectual and moral virility of the Reformation. It appreciates the inestimable value of the greater sectarian movements, as constituents of Protestant liberty. It attributes to them (as was shown in the last Lecture) the liberalization of religious thinking; the distribution of authority; the counteraction of erroneous accent; the humanizing of Christianity; and a vast burden of indirect testimony to the universality of the religion of Christ. This sentiment, as embodied in its most adequate representatives, has no thought of disturbing convictions consecrated alike by time and by temperament, nor of removing institutions made sacred by history and experience and adapted to carry on conveniently the business of the Church. The temper of this sentiment is reverent towards the past, and evolutionary rather than revolutionary towards the future. It recognizes in each historic reinterpretation of the Church, Catholic and Protestant, a sincere expression of contemporary necessity. The Church

shaped itself to the intellectual and moral actuality of life in each succeeding period. It was at all times a religious expression of contemporary human consciousness. When men thought little and tremblingly, the Church was autocratic, imperial, a controller of reason and lord of conscience. When men thought vigorously and independently, the Church became deliberative, heterogeneous, comprehensive, educational; liberty of conscience was exalted above uniformity; the right of private judgment above submission. Thus the deep foundations of Protestantism were laid in strength of conviction, by hands inured to war, as ready to draw the sword as to open the Bible. For these sacred foundations the new sentiment spreading in the Church entertains proper reverence. It dreams not of dislodging them, but of building upon them a nobler structure, carrying up the walls of the Church to more royal heights on simpler lines. It sees nothing essentially final in the present development of the Church on the lines of sectarian division evolved in post-Reformation controversies.

It is conscious of a relative lack of adequacy and efficiency in the present Protestant *status quo.* The keenness of denominational issues having abated, public interest in the churches themselves gives signs of weakness. There is also a relative lack of cooperation between the various parts of the Christian body; most evident in towns where several sectarian churches survive by a process of languid competition, and a whole community pays tribute to the past by losing the inspiration of common worship and united effort. The imagination can easily conceive a more apostolic and more adequate interpretation of the august conception of the Church as Christ's Body on earth, than that presented at many local points by the Protestant *status quo.* And it is quite within the range of possibility that there shall be a complete reinterpretation in the future, even as there has been in the past. The inertia of habit makes it difficult for us to realize that such a reinterpretation may be at hand; even one that shall recombine on new and simpler lines the religious life of tens of thousands of towns and

villages throughout the areas of Protestantism, and do away with old distinctions in the interest of new energy, reinvigorated worship, wiser use of resources. It is the perennial tendency of the human mind to regard familiar conditions as permanent, and to put away the thought of fundamental reconstructions of life. "I shall never be moved" is one of the most thoroughly human of all delusions. The Papacy, at its princely height of power, conceived itself seated in the throne of eternal dominion; the authoritative and final interpretation of the Church. Yet science, philosophy, democracy, and the silent breathing of the free Spirit of God have drawn out from Papal control the dominant religious forces of the world and have opened a vista of religious development in which the recovery of the mediæval conception of authority grows ever more impossible. We and our fathers have lived in the denominational atmosphere; it has permeated our forms of thought; it has preempted our outlook; by the laws of association and analogy it gives promise of continuance; yet in our

time many thousands of our most consecrated clergy and laity involuntarily think of sectarianism as a waning interpretation of the great Churchly conception, and consolidate their efforts on lines that traverse all sectarian boundaries and embrace all who name the name of Christ. Whether we approve or disapprove this sentiment is not the question. The sentiment exists; each year is making it more prominent. The vision of some larger unity as yet unrealized is characteristic of our time. It haunts our thinking. I have much sympathy with those who resist and resent this idea; who desire that all things shall continue as they have been. Use, familiarity, fond associations endear existing institutions, and our affections prompt us to impute to them permanence. Meanwhile intellectual and religious conditions may be changing in ways of which others are becoming conscious although we remain in fond unconsciousness; ways which day by day are making large readjustments inevitable because of the increasing number to whom the present is unsatisfactory. The purpose of this Lecture is to

deal with this sentiment in favour of a more homogeneous Church, considering the nature of the sentiment, its reasonableness, its content, its value. I propose to speak not as an advocate of the sentiment, but as a student of its phenomena so far as these can be estimated from a close study of unformulated contemporary data. What is it that is wanted? What is it that is hoped for by the noblest souls that profess to be dissatisfied with the Protestant *status quo?* I shall try to put this desire and hope into words.

It is important, for the purposes of our discussion, correctly to estimate the nature of the sentiment under consideration, discriminating between it and certain more or less familiar theories of improving the ecclesiastical situation. It should therefore be pointed out that this longing for a more homogeneous Church is not a desire for some new form of ecclesiastical uniformity; for a Church homogeneous in structure and under central authority. So to reorganize Protestantism would be, in effect, to create a new Roman Catholicism. This is a psychological impos-

sibility. We are farther away from it than ever before. There are individualizing tendencies at work, in the intellectual world, in the social world, in the world of religious experience, which place beyond the bounds of possibility a general revival of the Roman ideal. I refer to that ideal with respect. It has elements of majesty and efficiency; but it would be as easy to arrest the stars in their courses as to bring the enormous bodies of educated Nonconformity into submission beneath a central ecclesiastical authority. Nor do I think the Anglican substitute for Roman Catholic uniformity more likely to prevail. I have reference to the sincere but unavailable proposal of the Anglican Communion to outline a basis so broad and simple that all Protestant Christendom can stand together upon it. The proposal of the Lambeth Conference was to establish a fourfold basis of organic union: The Holy Scriptures; The Two Sacraments; The Catholic Creeds; The Historic Episcopate. It was a noble proposal, broadly interpreted by irenic and statesmanlike prelates. The immediate and

most obvious limitation upon its effectiveness was the fourth member of the quadrilateral: the Historic Episcopate. The intervening years have developed intellectual conditions that might create other grounds of dissent. But deeper than all concrete dissent from the specifications of the Lambeth Conference is the fundamental state of mind produced by the individualizing tendencies of modern culture and modern activity. To multitudes of strong men in the ministry and in the laity the necessity for structural and institutional unity in the Church is growing less and less apparent; while, on the other hand, the naturalness and flexibility of structural variation is becoming more and more consistent with modern conditions of intellectual life and modern types of spiritual fellowship and growth.

It is possibly a fair characterization of the present state of religious feeling, to say that while, on the one hand, the maintenance of acute sectarian issues is a waning interest, on the other hand, zeal for ecclesiastical unity, on a basis of voluntary structural uni-

formity, is also decreasing. The interpretation of this situation, so different from the common aspects of the past, may be as follows: The whole matter of churchly authority means less than it used to mean to the cultured clerical mind, and very much less to the cultured lay mind. It savours of unreality. The real thought of the age is grappling with problems far more vital and engrossed in work far broader. To go back to the old conception of Catholic authority as a primary interest, or to engage the efforts of the strongest and most cosmopolitan minds in a movement for ecclesiastical uniformity would be to force the hand many degrees backwards on the dial of time. The old issues cannot be revived. The old sense of the importance and reality of churchly authority cannot be recovered. The Christian consciousness perceives new doors opening in God's world; new light breaking. Once more sounds through the earth the Awful Voice that spake to the son of Amoz: "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"[1] When

[1] Is. 6: 8.

that Voice speaks, the prophetic soul turns to the future, not to the past.

It should also be pointed out that the sentiment under consideration, representing dissatisfaction with the Protestant *status quo*, and desire for some more homogeneous and simple interpretation of the Church does not have in view the creation of some new standard of theological orthodoxy to which the various sects shall agree to bind themselves. However attractive to the imagination is the picture of theological uniformity, as contrasted with the varying sectarian symbols, the reason perceives the illusion that invests the idea of a common confessional standard for Protestantism. The attempt to create such a standard would be, in principle, an attempt to revive, amidst the unique intellectual conditions of modern life, the ancient ideal of the Eastern Church. Catholicity, according to that ideal, was, not institutional uniformity of government, but philosophical uniformity of thought. Therefore the Eastern Church assumed the title: The Holy Orthodox Church, and, by that title, intimated her hope to bring

the thoughts of men into captivity to one confessional standard, promulgated by authority. Possibly we are farther away from that norm of Catholicity than any age since the Council of Nicæa. Not only is no such common confessional standard available, but no general desire for it appears. The spirit of the rising generation does not promise a growing interest in some elaborate and comprehensive Confession of Faith, which shall cover the whole field of theology and make a platform on which all believers can unite. There are deep reasons for this absence of desire for confessional uniformity; reasons that are not commonly cited by those who vaguely lament the decline of interest in the earlier conceptions of orthodoxy. Many who attempt to analyze this phenomenon of declining interest in orthodoxy, a phenomenon particularly marked in circles of culture, detect only the secondary causes and overlook primary considerations that greatly modify the situation. Our estimate of that situation is affected by our own training and point of view. Those who have been thoroughly trained under a

sectarian standard and who have done their work and their thinking chiefly within sectarian boundaries, see only decadence and danger in the wide-spreading indifference to orthodoxy as such. They attribute it to the following causes, which are described as characteristic of the present age: impatience of theological restraint; growth of rationalism; substitution of vague religious sentiment for definite belief. Undoubtedly these reasons for the decline of interest in orthodoxy on the part of many earnest and educated people apply to a certain measure, perhaps a relatively large measure, of modern thinking. Impatience of theological restraint exists and has been stimulated by sincere but futile efforts on the part of some, to bring judicial coercion to bear upon the intellectual processes of others. The growth of rationalism is a vague term; it means for some a growing appreciation of the right and duty of thinking, but doubtless also it has produced in many a reaction against the type of faith that vacates its intellectual birthright under submission to authority. The substitution of

vague religious sentiment for definite belief is undoubtedly one of our inheritances from Wordsworth and Coleridge, from the new knowledge of Oriental thought, from the later psychology; and one would not undertake to deny that upon many sensitive and intellectual souls it has brought down a veil of obscurantism, hiding the profounder meanings of the Incarnation and Sacrifice of the Son of God. But, while the foregoing reasons do, in part, explain the modern decline of interest in orthodoxy, there are other reasons, of deep seriousness and sacredness, which more adequately explain the attitude of a great number of pure and devout minds that are finding less and less satisfaction in the sectarian confessions of faith, and that do not look, with hope or with desire, for the formulation of some new and comprehensive standard that shall determine the orthodoxy of the future. Briefly stated, these deeper reasons include the following: It is becoming more and more apparent to many who have pondered the breadth of God's Word, the depth and variousness of Christian experience,

and the profound phenomena of the religious life of the race, that no one standard of belief, drawn up by official authority, can be sufficiently comprehensive to satisfy the growing company of those who truly hold the fundamental truths of the Christian religion. The Christian religion is greater than any possible official interpretation of it. It is also becoming evident to such minds that the whole conception of orthodoxy, as meaning conformity to a standard drawn up by authority and officially adopted as the touchstone of belief, no longer satisfies the most spiritual minds who desire only to know and to utter *the truth*, as that truth is revealed in Holy Scripture and certified inwardly to the believer through the witness of Christian experience, which is the direct and immediate channel of the Holy Spirit's testimony. There is a growing feeling that the technical idea of orthodoxy, as signifying conformity to an external authority rather than inward conviction of vital truth, has tempted men to preach what seemed to be expedient from the point of view of external order and ecclesiastical discipline, rather

than to preach, in the irresistible power of the Spirit, truth certified to the reason, the conscience and the affections, in the common experience of the spiritual children of God. Sixty years ago, Whately, one of the major prophets of the nineteenth century, lifted up his voice against the sin of preaching what seems to be expedient from the point of view of orthodoxy. In his essay "On the Love of Truth" (an essay that ought to be engraven on the heart of any man going out into the ministry to-day), he points out that this is the sin which most easily besets those who are engaged in the instruction of others. The subtle penalty of the sin is that the consciousness of insincerity gradually wears away, and the usage of preaching makes easy the repetition of ideas full of unreality. "He who does not begin by preaching what he believes, will end by believing what he preaches." His habit of discriminating the true from the false will decay. He will lose the power of distinguishing what conclusions are true. From such a ministry the mantle of power is withdrawn. Even if truth be

preached, the self-evidencing glory of original conviction has departed from the preacher. From henceforth the Divine energy which pierces the souls of men as with a two-edged sword no longer emanates from him. He remains orthodox, yet powerless. It may be that orthodoxy and truth are identical. Many times they are identical. But there is an increasing number, in and out of Christian pulpits, who believe that the first interest must be *truth;* to hold things and to preach things not because they are declared true, but because they *are* true.

There remains one other reason to be cited in explanation of the declining interest in confessional orthodoxy which is a phenomenon of contemporary religious thinking. To many who, by the modern processes of Biblical study have arrived at new and larger appreciation of Holy Scripture, it appears that the sectarian confessions, however excellent in themselves, stand between the mind of the believer and that all-sufficient and Divine provision which God has made in His Holy Revelation of Truth.

As a more adequate knowledge of the Bible is reached, the sectarian confession appears to become unnecessary. In many instances it seems to offer a narrower and more shallow foundation for faith than that eternal and sufficient foundation that is laid already in the Living Word and the Written Word of God. A study of the great sectarian confessions, from this point of view, and even of the so-called Catholic creeds—the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed—shows their inadequacy; an inadequacy growing out of the fact that generally these official deliverances came into existence to controvert certain contemporaneous errors. They were not, and by their framers were not intended to be—comprehensive instruments. They dealt with matters then in dispute, but left out other fields of truth which, not being under discussion at the time, were silently taken for granted. In illustration of this one may point to the inadequacy of the Westminster Confession of 1643 in its deliverances on the Person of Christ and on the Christianization of the world. The religious consciousness

of later Presbyterianism has demanded and obtained partial recompense for these omissions. In like manner the Apostles' Creed, venerable and beautiful as it is, embodying many of the most precious associations and immortal convictions of the Church of Christ, furnishes little that satisfies a Christian of the apostolic type, touching the Divinity of our Blessed Lord, or His Most Holy and Availing Atonement. The deepest spiritual life of to-day retains the Catholic creeds with joy as expressions of devotion and as holy inheritances; but not as tests of belief. It feels the need of going behind these partial statements to find the satisfaction of its religious needs in the Divine fullness of Scriptural Revelation.

I have now attempted to differentiate the sentiment in favour of a more homogeneous and simple interpretation of the Church from those expressions of a similar desire which have projected, as the means of its fulfillment, on the one hand, organic institutional uniformity under central ecclesiastical authority; on the other hand, confessional uni-

formity, under one comprehensive standard of orthodoxy. If this differentiation has been successful we are brought, by a process of elimination, to ask: What, then, does this sentiment in favour of a homogeneous Church, desire? Can we interpret this yearning for some greater and better embodiment of the life of the Christian society, which fills many true and worshipful hearts that are dissatisfied with the Protestant *status quo?* As one who has encountered this sentiment in many parts of the world and in many centres of noble influence, let me attempt to give an account of its nature: It appears to be a growing conviction that in the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ there are certain universal and permanent elements, which constitute the essence of the religion. I shall not describe this essence as the irreducible minimum, lest I be supposed to teach that its content is small and meagre. On the contrary its content is majestic and opulent. The fullness of the Godhead is in it; the depths of the riches of Divine grace are in it; the unspeakable gift of God is in it; the

treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in it; the depth and height and breadth and length of the love of God are in it. The growing appreciation of the Biblical content, the broadening scope of Christian experience are disclosing the vast proportions of these universal and permanent elements that constitute the essence of the Christian religion. It is becoming more apparent to the most earnest religious thinking of our time that these characteristic data of our religion are the common possession of all who hold the Christian faith and the common opportunity of all people under heaven; that this essence abides in every age; that the sectarian differentia of Protestantism have not broken the unity and sufficiency of this essence; and that believers everywhere, who, by birth and training represent different sects, are awaking to a sense of their common inheritance and are being drawn together through their voluntary assimilation of the common belief. Joined with this sense of the common essence is the growing conviction that the Spirit is leading on towards a reinterpretation of the

idea of the Church, in which a new life and power and a new capacity for the Christianization of the world shall develope throughout the Church; interest in the sectarian differentia being superseded by vitalized conceptions of the fundamental and common truths. It will be observed that the sentiment which I am analyzing is altogether different from impatience of theological restraint, or growth of rationalism, or substitution of vague religious sentiment for definite belief. So far from this, it is a sentiment in the highest degree spiritual; in the highest degree favourable to what may be described as a *renaissance*, a new birth, of faith; the recovery of a faith in the essentials of Christianity that shall be clothed with springlike vivacity and beauty.

The nature of this sentiment having been exhibited, we may now proceed to determine its reasonableness. Pious sentiment is not always reasonable. Its intensity may make it irrational. "Stung by the splendour of a sudden thought," it may ignore practical conditions and tendencies

that place the object of desire beyond the bounds of probability. But the present widespread yearning for a more simple reinterpretation of the idea of the Church is supported by considerations that appeal to reason. The reasonableness of this sentiment appears in three particulars: its philosophical probability; its concurrence with the analogy of truth; its harmony with the ideal of Jesus Christ. The growing Christian consciousness of a common essence and deposit of truth is philosophically normal, in view of the growth of culture and the advancement of friendly intercourse between representative members of Christian sects. Segregation and ignorance beget and protect prejudice. They lend themselves to the exaggeration of differences and the propagation of strifes. Race hatreds and caste barriers are promoted by them; sectarian animosities are perpetuated. With the enrichment of culture and the enlarging horizon of thought come humanistic intercourse, unconscious growth of fraternalism; unifying of sentiment; coordination of experience. The process is involuntary: as cul-

ture grows people cannot be kept apart by imaginary barriers; they attain substantial oneness without plan or intention; they awake, from dreams of prejudice, to see eye to eye beneath the impartial light of reality. Such must be the history of religious thought, as a true historical perspective and a normal interchange of experience dissolves the shadowy prejudices of a few hundred years, and sets above all segregating illusions the vision of the Eternal Majesty of Christ. Not alone in its philosophical probability does the reasonableness of the present sentiment appear. One must observe also its concurrence with the analogy of truth. In the history of human thought fundamental truth is seen to be self-evidencing. The monumental propositions that involve the physical or moral life of the race emerge into certitude and rise, like pyramids upon the desert; imperishable facts towering above the levels of local incident. Monotheism; monogamy; equality of rights in a democratic state are truths that depend on the voice of no man nor school; they rise in self-evidencing

authority to command the homage of the moral reason, as among the things that cannot be shaken. So the substantial content of the Christian revelation vindicates itself in the Christian consciousness, as time advances. Its authority is not that of council or sect. It is a self-evidencing authority that abides—the same yesterday, to-day and forever. The caravans cross the desert, encamp beneath the shadow of the pyramids, pass on their way: the pyramids stand, neither impatient for their coming nor vexed by their going. The sectarian movements of Christian thought pass and repass before the untroubled majesty of apostolic truth; the schools debate and divide; the currents of opinion meet in controversy; the toil of the scholar continues. Meanwhile the things that cannot be shaken abide in the eternal calm, and men look up to them with clearer eyes and love them with a deepening love that casts out fear and lifts above partisanship and strife.

The reasonableness of the present sentiment appears in one other particular: Its

harmony with the ideal of Jesus Christ. In the untroubled majesty of the Christian revelation, the central feature is the Person of Christ as presented in the Fourth Gospel. The portraitures of the Synoptists are full of the enchanting realism of humanity. In them Jesus of Nazareth walks before us as our Brother-Man; in the corn-fields; in the fishing-boat; at the feast; by the sick-bed; in the garden; on the Cross—He is everywhere transfused with the reality of manhood. But in the Fourth Gospel we have the prescient Christ of God; the Christ of Christian experience; the Christ that has made Christianity what it is at its best. Around the Fourth Gospel pass and repass continually the several phases of critical opinion, but the Christ of the Fourth Gospel, who is also the Christ of the Epistles, towers in His Divine Majesty above all critical opinion whatsoever; self-revealing; self-evidencing. His ideal for His Church is strikingly suggestive of the wide-spread sentiment that is turning from the denominational *status quo* of Protestantism towards some greater

and simpler interpretation of the spirit of the Christian society. The prescient Christ evidently hoped and expected His followers ultimately to concur among themselves and to become one in Himself. For this concurrence He prayed. It is impossible to believe His prayer to have been in vain. Its fulfillment in time is certain. If we understood the signs of our age better, and were less embarrassed by precedent and prejudice in interpreting them, we might not find it difficult to comprehend the new spiritual and intellectual movements of the last sixty years and to account for the present situation in the sectarian churches. It is, at least, reasonable to admit the possibility that a great movement towards the Christly conception of a simplified Church is near at hand, even at our doors.

I come now to the most vital part of my subject, namely: The Content of the Common Essence. I have attempted to show that the present sentiment in favour of a homogeneous Church arises not from the desire for institutional or confessional uni-

formity, but from a new appreciation of the universal and permanent elements of the Christian religion as constituting a common essence. This vivid realization of the common essence causes many to grow impatient of the complicated Protestant *status quo*, with its elaborate sectarian organizations, its costly duplications of effort, and its very moderate percentage of success in influencing the life of Christianized communities and in accomplishing the Christianization of the world. The theory of the Church, as at present constituted, seems to many ponderous, relatively unfruitful, and, in fact, not properly correlated to the present general appreciation of the common essence of the Christian religion. The question is forcing itself more and more upon thinking Christians: Is the Church being held back by her own institutions? Have intelligent and vital Christians outgrown the machinery of Protestantism? Are they in need of a simplified interpretation of the Church? Can the Protestant *status quo* be satisfactory to Christ, as representing that glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle or

any such thing, in which and through which He can work freely?

Assuming a reinterpretation of the idea of the Church, in which the sectarianism of the present shall be merged in the interest of the fundamental and universal elements of the Christian religion, momentous importance attaches to the question: What are those fundamental and universal elements? Where are we to look for them? This is the question which, perhaps more than any other, has been forcing itself upon the present age, in view of the change of sentiment regarding sectarian subscription. If we are moving towards a common essence, what is that common essence? Eminent students of Christianity in various parts of the world are engaged in answering this question. To the prevailing tone of recent attempts to define the essence of Christianity I wish to draw attention. The trend of contemporary opinion is very largely in one direction: namely, to define the essence of Christianity as consisting merely of the teachings and example of Jesus, as recorded in the first three Gospels

in distinction from that view of the Person of Christ as the Eternal Word, manifesting the Father, and the Work of Christ as the suffering and triumphing Saviour of the world, as set forth in the Fourth Gospel and in the Apostolic Epistles.

This trend of contemporary opinion appears to have been determined largely by the following considerations:

First, The resistance of scholastic theology awakened by modern advances and reconstructions in philosophy.

Secondly, The resistance of apostolic theology through identifying it with the ponderous scholastic systems built upon it. This has involved very largely the rejection of the teachings of St. Paul regarding the Person and Work of Christ, as teachings which were produced by Greek and Jewish influences tending to obscure the pristine simplicity of Jesus of Nazareth and His ethics.

Thirdly, The growth of the historical method of Biblical study; whereby the accent becomes more and more concentrated on

the narrative of the first three Gospels, including the teachings and the idealistic example of Jesus as constituting the essence of the Christian religion.

Concerning each of these elements of contemporary opinion there is a serious, thoughtful word to be said.

The modern resistance of scholastic theology can cause no surprise to an unprejudiced mind. The scholastic theology in certain particulars is disqualified for present use by the fact that its philosophical point of view is measurably out of relation with the canons of modern thinking. Some of its fundamental conceptions have been so largely abandoned by later reconstructionists that to the younger generation they are almost unintelligible. This implies no religious change, but rather an intellectual change. The human mind, if it be normally active, is ever advancing and reconstructing its philosophical positions. The new wine cannot adapt itself to the old wine skins. If the terms and formulæ of scholastic theology be enforced without discrimination on dis-

ciples of newer schools of philosophy the risks involved are serious: there may occur the rejection of truth, or, if the temper be passive, a not less grave calamity, the profession of belief without reality of conviction. But, while resistance of certain aspects of theological scholasticism is, in principle, reasonable and, in practice, inevitable, it by no means follows that the present tendency to indiscriminate rejection of the older theologies is a judicious method of dealing with the situation, or one that promises any advantage not balanced by corresponding loss. Alert thinkers of our time are advising complete separation of Christian theology from the problems of ontology, and are undertaking to reduce it to a practical discipline regulated by the religious and social ideals of Jesus of Nazareth. Before committing ourselves to the attractive simplicity of this theory of reconstruction it is well to reflect upon two things: The scholastic theology although it may be unsatisfactory to us, by reason of our intellectual environment, un-

doubtedly enshrined truth which evolved the vital and characteristic experiences of the Christian religion, and developed a type of intense piety, and an attitude of moral obedience not produced in equal measure by the reduced modern interpretation of the essence of Christianity. It is perilously easy for the modern indiscriminate resistance of scholastic theology to swing to the extreme of an anti-theological scholasticism, which, priding itself on historical accuracy, may yet fail more conspicuously than the theologians of the seventeenth century to represent the essence of the Christian religion and to furnish material for a genuine Christian experience. If, in the attempt to shake off the influence of Neoplatonism, the fundamental doctrines of Biblical Christianity are to be discarded, the last state of religion shall be worse than the first.

The modern search for the essence of Christianity—a search most necessary in itself—has developed a secondary, and momentous, resultant of the indiscriminate

resistance of scholastic theology. It is the resistance of the apostolic theology, especially the theology of St. Paul. The effects of this are already appearing in the impoverished religious values of the sermons produced by the younger generation of preachers; and the deplorable decline of spiritual life and knowledge in many churches. Results open to observation show that the movement to simplify the Christian essence by discarding the theology of St. Paul easily carries the teaching of the Christian pulpit to a position where, for those who submit to that teaching, the characteristic experiences of the Christian life become practically impossible. The Christian sense of sin; Christian penitence at the foot of the Cross; Christian faith in an Atoning Saviour; Christian peace with God though the Mediation of Jesus Christ—these and other experiences, which were the very life of apostles and of apostolic souls, fade from the view of the ministry, have no meaning for the younger generation. After twenty centuries of power

they are minimized in the life of the Church; which, governed for the time being by the radicalism of its teachers, substitutes for the real essence of the Christian religion, essentially spiritual and metaphysical, a practical obedience to the ethical teachings of Jesus. This, however necessary in itself, by no means represents the fullness and distinctiveness of the Revelation of God in Christ.

A remark must also be made concerning the present tendency to set the whole accent of Biblical study upon the historical, as contrasted with the metaphysical, view of Christ. The admirable zeal manifested in the study of the life of Christ is in a measure offset by the tendency to separate the example and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth from the Christ crucified and risen, the Christ of the apostolic consciousness and of the consecutive Christian experience of the world. With such significant discrimination are we now being pointed to the historical Christ as distinguished from the metaphysical and theological Christ,

that, for the time being, the historical method is in danger of becoming unhistorical, and the teacher who seeks to represent the Jesus of history may easily misrepresent and conceal the Redeemer of the world.

It is not at all extraordinary that these temporary faults of proportion should occur at the present stage in the evolution of religious thinking. A very great reaction towards the historical and the actual was called for in the premises, to offset the deadening unreality of theological systems that were excessively metaphysical and speculative. In every great reaction there is the probability of over-accentuation. Our obligations to the reactionary elements in modern religious thinking are very large. Through the vigorous agency of these reactionary elements a demonstration has been made of those particulars wherein the scholastic theology was unsatisfactory, deficient, unreal. Through the same reactionary elements the Apostolic Age has been illuminated with reality; the philosophical influences bearing upon it have

been plainly shown (not always, it must be added, in a manner wholly free from prejudice). Especially are we indebted to the modern historical reaction for the recovery of the human verisimilitude of Jesus. He, who had become but a theological name in the scholastic systems, who had been buried and hidden in the sepulchre of orthodoxy, has had a glorious resurrection into the world of reality. Once again He walks among His brethren in the lovely and desirable incidents of daily life; His voice is heard; the touch of His hand is felt; the perfection of His conduct is realized. It is impossible to overestimate the advantages accruing from this extrication of the historic Jesus from the mist-veils of theological impersonality. But, at this moment, we are experiencing the incidental disadvantage of beneficent reaction. As, formerly, the metaphysical forced aside the historical and developed the excesses of speculative orthodoxy, so, now, the historical, focussing its light upon the narrative, throws into shadow the Christ of the apostolic consciousness, the mysteries of His Person, the

majesty of His Work, the metaphysic of Christian experience, and leaves us only Jesus of Nazareth, His life-purpose, example, and words. This, we are told, is the essence of Christianity; this, and this only, must be the organizing principle of that new reinterpretation of the idea of the Church for which many, dissatisfied with the Protestant *status quo*, are anxiously looking. But, so far from the general consciousness of the devout Church accepting this reactionary dictum, the unsatisfactoriness of the present teaching, which leaves us only Jesus of Nazareth, is becoming more apparent from day to day. It is not a large enough teaching to take the place of the majestic conceptions of the scholastic theology, much less to be substituted for the theological outlook of St. Paul. We may dissent from many things urged by the divines of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, nevertheless they saw things on a grand scale. The Christianity they taught was one that could fill the horizon of an intellectual age and could inspire the awe-stricken devotion of souls like Milton, and Zinzendorf,

and Doddridge and Toplady and the Wesleys. The historical reaction from metaphysical conceptions of Christ leaves us indeed an admirable practical discipline, but it cuts the wings of the soul and reduces the scale and measure of its thinking. It cannot meet the craving of the human spirit, which knows but too well those hours when the metaphysical is the only outlet to the pent-up sense of infinity. It cannot produce the type of character which has been the glory of every Christian age, character steeped in metaphysical conceptions of God in Christ, of Christ in the soul of man, of man absolved by the sacrificial love, transfigured by the regenerating grace of the Incarnate God. It cannot grapple with the problems of the Christianization of the world, in lands where the historical counts for little, and where he only has power who bears the message of life in the terms of its philosophical equivalents.

The over-accentuation of the historical is but a step towards a larger readjustment. Everywhere are signs of a richer, more com-

prehensive thought-movement. We may call it a movement for the recovery of the apostolic theology. There are two points of view from which to regard this movement towards a recovery of the essence of the Christian religion. It may be regarded as an escape from the burdensome and complex elements of scholastic theology, to the evangelical simplicity and tenderness that are in Christ. Or it may be looked upon as an advance from the present limited view of Jesus as a mere teacher and a mere personal and social ideal, to that apostolic view, which, in every age, has conditioned Christian experience: the view of Christ as the Image of the invisible God and the Author of an eternal salvation.

Upon this ground it is possible for the next great reinterpretation of the idea of the Church to be made. It is not the invention of a new standard of orthodoxy. It is the recovery of the earliest ground of faith. It is not the new cry "Back to Christ," in the sense of casting aside the apostolic Christology. It is a return to Christ in the spirit of that

beloved disciple, who, beholding the glory of the Crucified and Risen One, fell at His feet in the adoration of faith, and heard the voice that pronounced the eternal charter of Christian faith and Christian experience: "I am the Living One: and I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

The Christology of the apostles has within it, like Him of whom it testifies, "the power of an endless life." In our weakness and love of controversy, we may for a time confuse that Christology, may overlay it with our own scholasticisms and may turn from it in a weariness for which we ourselves are responsible. But we turn from it only to turn back to it. We lose the meaning of the apostolic Christology for a season, only to find it again, glorified an hundredfold in honour and vitality. The apostles, like their Master, may be despised and rejected of men for a time; but, like Him, they rise again, leading captivity captive, giving gifts unto men. The effort to set the apostolic theology aside only results in an inevitable and

impressive demonstration of its necessary relation to Christianity. In his splendid essay "On Some of the Difficulties in the Writings of the Apostle Paul," Richard Whately embodies a thought with which I may fitly close this lecture on *The Recovery of the Apostolic Theology:* "Next, after an able and full and interesting vindication and explanation of Paul's writings, the sort of work whose appearance ought most to be hailed, is a plausible attack on them. Paul's labours can never be effectually frustrated except by being kept out of sight. Whatever brings him into notice will, ultimately, bring him into triumph. All the malignity and the sophistries of his adversaries will not only assail him in vain, but will lead in the end to the perfecting of his glory and the extension of his gospel. They may scourge him uncondemned, like the Roman magistrate at Philippi; they may inflict on him the lashes of calumnious censure;—but they cannot silence him; they may thrust him, as it were, into a dungeon, and fetter him with their strained interpretations; but his voice will be raised even at

the midnight of unchristian darkness, and will be heard effectually; his prison doors will burst open as with an earthquake, and the fetters will fall from his hands; and even strangers to gospel truth will fall down at the feet of him, even Paul, to make that momentous inquiry, 'What must I do to be saved?'"

LECTURE IV

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

LECTURE IV

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

IN this course of Lectures, I am attempting to present an argument in favour of a reinterpretation of the idea of the Church upon more simple and homogeneous lines, to the end that the Church may more effectively accomplish the work entrusted to her by Jesus Christ. The basis for such a reinterpretation I conceive to be the universal elements of the Christian religion. That the perspective of this argument may appear, it is necessary to review, with some care, our path of thought.

In the first Lecture we considered what the work is that Christ had entrusted to His Church. It is the Christianization of the world. This means something more great and more simple than the endeavour of Western sects to reproduce themselves in the East. It means more than interdenominational comity, which is in itself a desirable substi-

and fulfill the West by contributing aspects of Christian truth as seen from the Eastern point of view and mediated through Eastern religious experience.

Having before us this definition of the Christianization of the world, as the work entrusted to the Church by Jesus Christ, we proceeded, in the second Lecture, to inquire into the bearing upon this great object of attainment, of those sectarian movements which, born of forces liberated by the Reformation, have for centuries formed the recognized and, apparently, necessary, condition of the Protestant *status quo.* Assuming, at the outset, that the idea of the Church existed perfectly in the mind of Christ only, and that its history since His Ascension has been a series of reinterpretations of the idea, more or less limited by human infirmity, we considered that remarkable outburst of sectarian movements which occurred at and after the Reformation. It was a reinterpretation of the idea of the Church on lines of diversity and individualism perfectly in correspondence with the intellectual activity and democratic

self-realization that were produced by the revival of learning, and that made the revolt from Catholic authority inevitable. It is impossible to overestimate the advantage accruing to vital Christianity from those sectarian movements. Narrow as was the basis on which some of them stood; secondary or fanciful as were the contentions supposed to justify the existence of some of them; darkened and stained as were their annals by bigotry, zeal without knowledge, and cruelty, they achieved the moral and intellectual salvation of the West. Greater than their defects were their excellences and sublimities. Sincerity, conviction, the vision of God in Christ, sanctified them. They produced the successors of prophets and apostles, who counted not their lives dear unto themselves; of whom the world was not worthy. It is impossible to conceive any other instrument by which the Christian consciousness could have been emancipated from mediævalism, and reinstated in the glorious liberty of sonship. By the liberalization of religious thinking, by the distribution of authority, by the counteraction

of erroneous accent on particular beliefs, by the humanizing of Christianity and its restoration to the hands of the common people, and by indirect testimony to the universal scope of the Christian essence, the post-Reformation sectarian movements dispersed a sluggish atmosphere that had gathered about the Church, turned again the captivity of the spiritual Zion, accelerated the coming of the Kingdom of God.

But, with the passage of time, new conditions emerge, new questions arise. Those forms of activity, most beneficent in the period immediately following the rupture with Catholic authority, may not be competent to deal with the situation created by the critical movement, the philosophical reconstruction, the new psychology, the new conception of missionary policy. Cromwellian equipment and Cromwellian tactics were ample at Marston Moor, but would be inadequate at Mukden. It is profoundly difficult to realize the provisional nature of familiar institutions; more especially institutions with which our lives have become incorporated by inheritance.

Nothing is more perplexing than to bring home to ourselves the law of transition:

> Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day, and cease to be;
> They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

Nevertheless, the limitations and practical inadequacy of sectarian movements and the unsatisfactoriness of the Protestant *status quo* are being felt more and more seriously by many intelligent Christians, who are longing for a simple reinterpretation of the idea of the Church, answering to the simplified conception of vital Christianity. To many of these minds, such a reinterpretation seems not impossible, perhaps not improbable. Many feel that such a reinterpretation is necessary, and that until it comes the life of the Church cannot be sufficiently stimulated and unified, sufficiently liberated from secondary considerations, to enable it to complete the sacred task delivered to it by the Lord: the Christianization of the world.

In the third Lecture I undertook to ex-

amine the nature and content of this wide-spread and relatively unorganized longing for a more satisfactory state of the Church: What is it that is wanted and hoped for? Negatively we found that it is not a desire for some new form of ecclesiastical uniformity; or for the creation of a new standard of orthodoxy. In distinction from these institutional and official methods of reorganization the present sentiment moves away from institutionalism and considers life and truth mediated through experience to be the basis of a simplified Church. It perceives that the common reason and faith of the Christian society recognize certain universal and permanent elements as constituting the essence of Christianity, and that these elements, the objects of common recognition, are the natural basis, and possibly the sufficient basis, for that more homogeneous, simple and spiritual Church which shall effect the Christianization of the world. With this thought gaining control of many minds that once were interested in maintain-

ing denominational distinctions and now are wholly indifferent thereto, it becomes apparent that great importance attaches to the content of the alleged essence of the Christian religion. I pointed out that this question is at the front of religious thinking and that the prevailing answer of contemporary scholarship defines the essence of Christianity as consisting of the teachings and example of Jesus as recorded in the first three Gospels, rather than that view of the Person of Christ as the Image of the invisible God, and the Work of Christ as the suffering and triumphing Saviour of the world, which is set forth in the Fourth Gospel and the Apostolic Epistles. I acknowledged our great debt to scientific scholarship for exhibiting the inadequacy of certain features of the scholastic theology, for calling attention to the philosophical influences that touched the lives of the apostles and were reflected in their teachings; and for restoring to us the priceless verisimilitude of the historic Jesus of Nazareth. But, with all gratitude for these

great gains, I expressed with earnestness my conviction that these considerations, however valuable, are inadequate as the basis for a reinterpretation of the idea of the Church that can satisfy the religious consciousness of the present time. It is not a large enough teaching. It does not meet the measure of the soul's horizon nor answer its unbidden yearning for such direct communion with Christ, in the sanctuary of the metaphysical consciousness as, apparently, was the very life of St. Paul and his contemporaries. It does not tend to produce that characteristic type of personality, which, historically, connotes the Christian who is living in Christ's presence and is fortified by the grace which is Christ's perpetual gift. It cannot grapple with the problem of the Christianization of the world which is, essentially a problem of metaphysical experience rather than of historical knowledge, and one that involves principles of thought and action that are cosmopolitan and comprehensive rather than local and factional, that sets the temperament of a

race above the dictum of a school. Beneath the conspicuous modern tendency to define the irreducible minimum of Christian truth as the Christ of the Synoptists and the ethical code of Jesus, there runs a deeper tide of tendency which represents the progress of contemporary thought that has neither been satisfied with the Protestant *status quo* nor willing to cast in its lot with a radicalism which, in abjuring the scholastic theology declares also its independence of apostolic Christianity. That profounder thought movement, which has not yet been fully formulated, which has not yet had time to show how the critical movement makes for a richer faith, I have described as the recovery of the apostolic theology. It is, on the one hand, an escape from the burdensome and complex elements of the scholastic theology to the evangelical tenderness and simplicity that are in Christ. It is, on the other hand, an advance from the present limited view of many scientific theologians, wherein Jesus is a mere teacher and a mere personal and social ideal, to

great gains, I expressed with earnestness my conviction that these considerations, however valuable, are inadequate as the basis for a reinterpretation of the idea of the Church that can satisfy the religious consciousness of the present time. It is not a large enough teaching. It does not meet the measure of the soul's horizon nor answer its unbidden yearning for such direct communion with Christ, in the sanctuary of the metaphysical consciousness as, apparently, was the very life of St. Paul and his contemporaries. It does not tend to produce that characteristic type of personality, which, historically, connotes the Christian who is living in Christ's presence and is fortified by the grace which is Christ's perpetual gift. It cannot grapple with the problem of the Christianization of the world which is, essentially a problem of metaphysical experience rather than of historical knowledge, and one that involves principles of thought and action that are cosmopolitan and comprehensive rather than local and factional, that sets the temperament of a

race above the dictum of a school. Beneath the conspicuous modern tendency to define the irreducible minimum of Christian truth as the Christ of the Synoptists and the ethical code of Jesus, there runs a deeper tide of tendency which represents the progress of contemporary thought that has neither been satisfied with the Protestant *status quo* nor willing to cast in its lot with a radicalism which, in abjuring the scholastic theology declares also its independence of apostolic Christianity. That profounder thought movement, which has not yet been fully formulated, which has not yet had time to show how the critical movement makes for a richer faith, I have described as the recovery of the apostolic theology. It is, on the one hand, an escape from the burdensome and complex elements of the scholastic theology to the evangelical tenderness and simplicity that are in Christ. It is, on the other hand, an advance from the present limited view of many scientific theologians, wherein Jesus is a mere teacher and a mere personal and social ideal, to

that apostolic view, which, in every age, has conditioned Christian experience, of Christ as the Image of the invisible God, the Author of an eternal salvation. We have now reviewed our path of thought up to the present stage of the argument. By this review we place in right perspective the theme and purpose of this Lecture. The central figure in the field of apostolic theology is the Figure of Christ crucified and risen, the Saviour of the World. Our present inquiry is conducted with a view to ascertain to what extent that central thought—the Saviour of the World—offers a basis for those who are yearning for a fresh reinterpretation of the idea of the Church on grander and simpler lines. Does it carry with it the promise, not to say the reasonable assurance, that upon this basis the Church may at last fulfill the task committed to her by her Head; having recovered in its original power and simplicity that vision of Christ which, as a matter of plain, historic fact, was the foundation of the Church and the making of Christianity? Shall the Church,

by recovering in apostolic distinctness that radiant vision, recover also the homogeneous dignity, the power, faith, love and evangelical success that were the glory of the first days?

The dynamic of the Apostolic Church was its Christology: not merely its faith *in* Christ but its faith *concerning* Christ. The buoyancy and success of apostolic effort sprang not chiefly from an historical reminiscence of the life and words of Jesus but from a fixed interpretation of His Person, which was nothing if not metaphysical. Christ was, in the apostolic consciousness, an Only Begotten from a Father, existent before all worlds, incarnated in the fullness of time, His Incarnation culminating in His Atoning Death, His Resurrection, His Ascension and Enthronement as the Saviour of the World. From every point of view it is evident that the Apostolic Age owed its extraordinary religious effectiveness to its Christology. The enthralling glory of Christ seemed to swallow up the individuality of His first ambassadors. The pas-

sion of Orientalism glows in St. Paul's self-absorption in the metaphysical Christ. "For me to live is Christ" [1]— "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." [2] To be one with Him in His Incarnation; to be merged in its consummations of death and life — crucified with Him, risen with Him—this was the personal ambition of the most illustrious and most successful of His ministers. Love and fiery devotion could go no farther. It adds not a little to the gravity and perplexity of our present situation that so much excellent modern thinking is devoted to the effort to recover the apostolic zeal for Christ while rejecting the cause which produced it—namely, the apostolic Christology. Never perhaps since the age of St. Paul was there more unanimity in ascribing a central position to Christ. The name of Christ is on every lip. Interest in His words, His deeds, His historical environment, His social philosophy, His practical ethics is unprecedented. None can be found to dis-

[1] Phil. 1: 21. [2] Gal. 2: 20.

pute His supremacy as an example. Far beyond the limits of the Christian society, His admirers and friends throng. Hinduism respects Him; Mohammedanism and Judaism claim Him as their own. One is thankful for every step in the progressive recovery of the verisimilitude of Jesus. Such was the beauty of His conduct, such the purity of His character, such the emancipation of His mind from prejudice, He needs but to be known, to be loved by the universal heart. Nevertheless one cannot but ask: What shall be the outcome of a theological reconstruction that would separate Jesus from the apostolic Christology; minimizing what the apostles magnified, namely His metaphysical Sonship in the Godhead, His Atoning Sacrifice on the Cross, His Resurrection and Enthronement, and undertaking to supply dynamic for the Christianization of the world from the sparsely reported annals of a three years' ministry, which, upon His own showing, was but the limited and sorrowing prelude to His larger work as the crucified and risen

Saviour of the World. It is, perhaps, too soon to pronounce upon the outcome of a theological reconstruction founded solely on the biographical data of the Son of Mary, but it is not too soon to point out its complete divergence from the apostolic point of view and its necessary tendency to produce a type of religious experience from which some of the primary elements of the Christian consciousness are, in the nature of the case, excluded.

When we have affirmed that the dynamic of the Apostolic Church was its Christology, its faith concerning Christ, we have but opened the way for a more thorough inquiry into the source of that power which, obviously, issued from the Pauline conception of the Saviour of the world. I have sought earnestly to find the secret of the power of that idea, as it became the burden of the first preachers and the inspiration of those who came under their preaching. Evidently there was extraordinary power in the idea of Christ as the Saviour of the World. The name of Christ was no fetich on the lips

of the apostles, nor was it but a spur to the imagination, as suggesting memories of a beautiful and efficient career. It carried with it an appeal to reason and to conscience, and that appeal inhered not in the fact of the Incarnation merely, but, specifically, the Incarnation extending itself and consummating itself in the Sacrifice. "We preach," he said, "Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block and the Greeks foolishness, but to them that believe, Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation."[1]

I am sure that the secret spring of that vast dynamic—the Saviour of the World—was the Resurrection of Christ as the consummation of His Incarnate Sacrifice, rather than distinctively and separately the Act of Death. I do not forget the utterances of St. Paul that disclose his self-absorption in the mystery of Calvary. "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."[2] "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord

[1] 1 Cor. 1: 23, 24. [2] 1 Cor. 2: 2.

Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."[1] "I am crucified with Christ."[2] The meaning of these and other like expressions is too obvious to be disputed. St. Paul's crowning interest in the fact of Christ lay, not in the annals of the three years, but in the Event upon which those years converged and in which the supreme utterance of eternal justice and holy love was made. Yet in these utterances touching the Death of Christ we do not reach the final fact in St. Paul's religious consciousness. Back of them lies one fact yet more primal, on which his estimate of the Death rests; from which it receives force and buoyancy and moral significance. That ultimate fact is the Resurrection: the Dead of whom he speaks is already and eternally the Living One. But for this the meaning of the Death were gone. It is most striking to observe how, in his Corinthian deliverance on resurrection from the dead, his mind pours itself into the channel of hypothesis, and pourtrays the

[1] Gal. 6: 14. [2] Gal. 2: 20.

desolation that enfolds the Incarnation, the Cross and Christianity alike, "if Christ be not risen." As if to exhaust the category of negation he traces the fivefold catastrophe of an incarnation consummated in a death uncrowned by resurrection: The vanity of preaching: "If Christ be not risen our preaching is vain"; The emptiness of belief: "If Christ be not risen your faith is also vain"; The falsehood of testimony: "If Christ be not risen we are found false witnesses of God"; The failure of redemption: "If Christ be not risen ye are yet in your sins"; The collapse of hope: "If Christ be not risen, then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." [1]

As one reflects on these characteristic notes of the apostolic ministry, wherein the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus were magnified, one realizes the wide divergence from the primary grounds of Christian witness-bearing represented by the modern effort to detach essential Christianity from the Fourth Gospel and the Pauline

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. 15: 14–20.

Epistles and to confine it within the synoptical narratives. The purpose of this effort is frankly avowed. It is to disburden what is described as the essence of Christianity of the philosophical *impedimenta* contained in the apostolic interpretations of the Christian religion. It is to hold strictly to the lines of the narrative and to resist the overlay of metaphysical implications heaped upon the simple story of the Synoptists by those, who, coming afterwards, built a theology upon what was, and was meant to be, only a beautiful Life that went about doing good. As this movement for a simplified Christianity gains ground, it increasingly accentuates the ethical values of the life and teachings of our Lord, and grows increasingly silent concerning the significance of His Death and His Resurrection. In other words it minimizes what the apostles magnified, and magnifies as the chief message of the Incarnation what they, apparently, regarded as preliminary to the chief message, which was the message of the Cross and of the Risen Life. It is a very striking fact that a strongly defined tendency

of contemporary thought is to make little of the Resurrection of Christ—so little that one is often left in doubt as to whether the Rising from the Dead is accepted literally or is regarded as a figure of speech. It is pointed out that the witnesses of the Resurrection were few and their testimony was meagre. It is urged: Why complicate the simple influence of the words and example of Jesus by introducing the difficult and contradictory thought of His Resurrection from the grave, His coming back into a life that He had left by the ordinary exit, death? As a problem in religious thinking, this modern tendency, (an indirect result of the historical movement,) to diverge from the position on which the apostles stood, is most interesting. It should be studied attentively, and wholly without the resentment ordinarily meted out to deviations from orthodoxy. A fundamental question is involved in it: a question that must be dealt with in the light of the theological history of the last three hundred years: the question of the relation of the Atonement to the Incarnation. I would that

there were time to take up the bearings of this question upon the course of modern religious thought; to show how the present tendency to remain silent concerning the Atonement and the Resurrection, and to speak only of the Life and the teachings, is a reaction, slowly gathering volume through the last sixty years, from a scholastic theology that sought to account for the Atonement in academic considerations exterior to the fact instead of interpreting the death of Christ in the light of the Divine fact of the Incarnation. No one, perhaps, in all these years of theological unrest, has more discerningly analyzed the situation, than did that Scottish saint and prophet, John McLeod Campbell, who, being far in advance of his day, was misunderstood and rejected by his brethren as a heretic, but of whom Tulloch nobly said, "Never was Christian minister more divinely called. He was born to preach the Gospel, and to counsel and guide others in the Divine life. He had the true apostolical succession, if ever man had, and, what he had, he retained. The same

divine unction lay upon all his words, and followed him wherever he went. It is impossible to conceive a ministry more divinely consecrated and sustained, and yet more in the face of all church theory. He was as plainly 'called to be a minister of Jesus Christ through the will of God' as any apostle ever was, and his divine calling remained independent of any ecclesiastical sanction, and even grew richer in his isolation. The fact is beyond question, whatever our theories may make of it."[1] McLeod Campbell, in the introduction to his book: "The Nature of the Atonement, and its Relation to Remission of Sins and Eternal Life"[2] says, with a perspicuity and grasp on the situation that appear little less than inspired, when one reflects that the words were written in the time of Coleridge: "The faith of the Atonement presupposes the faith of the Incarnation. It may be also said historically that the faith of the Incarnation has

[1] Movements of Religious Thought (New York, *Scribners*, 1886), p. 146.

[2] Sixth Edition, London, 1886, p. xvi.

usually had conjoined with it the faith of the Atonement. The great question which has divided men as to these fundamental doctrines has been the relation in which they stand to each other—which was to be regarded as primary, which secondary?—was an atonement the great necessity in reference to man's salvation, out of which the necessity for the Incarnation arose, because a Divine Saviour alone could make an adequate Atonement for sin?—or, is the Incarnation to be regarded as the primary and highest fact in God's relation to man, in the light of which God's interest in man and purpose for man can alone be truly seen?—and is the Atonement to be contemplated as taking place in order to the fulfillment of the Divine purpose for man which the Atonement reveals? I feel it impossible in any measure to realize what I believe, in believing in the Incarnation, without giving a preference to the latter view; and accordingly my attempt to understand and illustrate the nature of the Atonement has been made in the way of taking the subject to the light of the Incar-

nation. Assuming the Incarnation, I have sought to realize the Divine mind in Christ as perfect Sonship towards God and perfect Brotherhood towards men, and, doing so, the Incarnation has appeared, developing itself naturally and necessarily as the Atonement." Two other utterances of McLeod Campbell I must quote as bearing upon our present discussion: "If the Atonement," he says, "is rightly conceived of as a development of the Incarnation, the relation of the Atonement to the Incarnation is indissoluble; and, in a clear apprehension of the Incarnation must be felt to be so."[1] Then, as if anticipating the present theological situation he adds: "Yet I cannot forget that there are earnest and deep-thinking minds in whose case the faith of the Incarnation and their acceptance of it as the fundamental grace of God to man, to the light of which all that concerns God's relation to man is to be taken, has issued, not in the recognition of the Atonement as a development of the Incarnation, but on the contrary, in regard-

[1] Op. cit., p. xviii.

ing the Atonement as, in the light of the Incarnation, alike uncalled for and inconceivable."[1] Words more expressive of the present situation could not be spoken. The present tendency is to reconstruct theology around a conception of the Incarnate Jesus which satisfies all the ethical requirements without introducing the metaphysic of Atonement, and which, thereby, relieves one of all obligation to attach importance to the Resurrection of Christ. This is precisely the state of thought that McLeod Campbell anticipated and of which he prophesied. It is easily accounted for. It is a reaction, and, one must add, a wholesome reaction, from scholastic persistence in developing theories of the Atonement dependent on academic considerations exterior to the fact. But it must never be forgotten that such a reconstruction is a complete divergence from apostolic Christianity, and from every historic precedent that has determined the course of Christian experience. It is a new Gospel, fashioned on other lines than those

[1] Op. cit., p. xviii.

that gave power to the ministry of the successors of Christ. The extent of this divergence McLeod Campbell foresaw, and estimated with prophetic insight the eliminations necessitated by a faith in the Incarnation that combines with a rejection of the Atonement and indifference to the Resurrection. "What is left out of Christianity is just that part of revealed truth in which the love of God is connected with the need of man as a sinner; all, in a word, which gives the Gospel a remedial character, representing the Son of God as having come 'to seek and to save that which was lost'—representing man as having destroyed himself, while revealing the hope that remained for him in God. Redemption only reveals the deep love of the Father of our spirits [redemption expressed in the terms of the Divine Sacrifice, which is the necessary consummation of the Divine Incarnation]. But to trace redemption to its ultimate root in the Divine fatherliness, and to regard that fatherliness as leaving no room for the need of redemption, are altogether opposite appre-

hensions of the grace of God."[1] It is safe to predict that a divergence so complete from the fundamental positions of Christianity cannot effect a permanent readjustment of religious thinking. Brilliant and sincere though it may be, and, for the time being, attractive as a substitute for ponderous scholasticism, it must soon disclose the relative poverty of its content as compared with the magnificent fullness of the apostolic theology; and the relative inability of its insistent appeal to history, to quench the unfathomable thirst of the soul for knowledge of the "deep things of God." The present curtailment of the field of theological thinking and the present disparagement of the metaphysical Scriptures are an episode in the history of religious thinking; contributing to the vitality, but not deflecting the current, of Christian belief. Already the counter reaction appears towards a more reverent worship of the Crucified Redeemer, a more profound apprehension of the power of His Resurrection. The sincerity of historical

[1] McLeod Campbell, op. cit., p. xxi.

criticism is bringing out the fact that Christianity is built on the Resurrection of the Crucified. The simple influence of the words and example of Jesus, enshrined in memory and appealing to the imagination, is not the actual dynamic that gave force and victory to those who went forth at the beginning, Christianizing the world. It was the glowing Gospel of Christ Risen. "Whatever may have happened at the grave," says Harnack,[1] "one thing is certain: this grave is the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is life eternal. Wherever there is a strong faith in the infinite value of the soul, wherever the sufferings of the present are measured against a future of glory, this feeling of life is bound up with the conviction that Jesus Christ has passed through death, that God has awakened and raised Him to life and glory. It is not by any speculative ideas of philosophy, but by the vision of Jesus' Life and Death, and by the feeling of His imperishable union with God, that mankind, so far

[1] *What is Christianity?* Eng. trans., p. 162.

as it believes in these things, has attained to that certainty of eternal life it was meant to know and which it dimly discerns; eternal life in time and beyond time."

But, when this conclusion is reached, concerning the original dynamic of Christianity, the field of inquiry is but fairly open for those who, by the recovery of apostolic theology, hope to witness, in the next great reinterpretation of the idea of the Church, a restoration of the spiritual power of the First Days, and a corresponding advance towards the Christianization of the world. Fundamental questions arise. Why did the Resurrection of the Crucified give Him power to transform the personal and social ideals of men? Whence came the converting and sanctifying power of that Gospel of the Resurrection, which, from the moment of its first promulgation, was a unique force for the redemption and transformation of character? Evidently that power did not reside in the miracle of the Resurrection, as such. The eye-witnesses, few in number and altogether without prestige, alleged certain physical

facts in connection with the rising of Christ from the dead. The broken seal, the unsocketed stone, the deserted tomb, the angel presence, the apparition of the Risen One in the garden—those were the external phenomena of the great Return to life. Taken by themselves, as items of testimony to an astounding fact, they might create astonishment in some, incredulity in others. They possessed no moral significance, reacting upon character. Mere reiteration of marvels could not produce a religion of the Spirit. It was in the moral significance of the Resurrection of the Crucified that we find the secret of immortal power that clothed the preaching of the apostles. It was in the moral message of a risen Christ to the individual soul and to society—a Christ who had tasted death for every man and had vindicated by Resurrection His claim to the allegiance of every man—that we find the clue to those marvellous transformations of personal and social ideals that marked the first efforts to Christianize society. The theology of the apostles, however it may have reflected

philosophical influences, Grecian or Jewish (and what teachers of any age can fail to reflect contemporary philosophical influences?) was essentially the interpretation, under the guidance of the Spirit, of the moral message of the Risen Christ. The evident intention of their preaching was, not to excite the imagination with physical details of the Uprising from the tomb, but to arrest the conscience and transfuse the reason with considerations that spring from the fact that the Crucified has vanquished death. The moral significance of the Resurrection flooded like sunlight the ministry of the Apostolic Church. The immensity of the subject towered above small questions of detail and conferred upon the earliest Christian preaching elemental grandeur and dignity. Those who heard the apostles felt themselves to be in the presence of men, each of whom had seen the vision of the face of God

> And by the vision splendid
> Was on his way attended.

The sterile formulæ of orthodoxy had no place in that impassioned preaching of life

and immortality. The fellowship of the Redeemer's sufferings, and the power of His Resurrection exalted and humbled these splendid apologists of the gospel of grace; who, despising earthly rewards, and sorrowing with Christly sorrow over the evils of humanity, were made all things to all men, that they might win disciples for Him who had been lifted upon Calvary. The moral significance of the Resurrection, as it became the burden of their preaching, extended Godward and manward, illuminating the mystery of the Incarnation; exhibiting the majesty of human life. By the Resurrection was certified the Divinity of the Son of God, the validity of His claim (concerning the fact of which no apostle ever doubted) to metaphysical union with Deity, the reality and effectiveness of His Sacrifice for sin. By the Resurrection assurance of personal immortality was given to men, and the present life was lifted above the vicissitudes of a perishable body and invested with infinite meaning and eternal value.

It will be seen, by these reflections upon

the ministry of the apostles, that the dynamic of Christianity was found originally in the Person of Christ and not originally in the eloquence of His sayings and the beneficence of His actions. The sayings and the actions took on their great significance because of what He was in Himself, as the "effulgence of the Father's glory, the express image of His substance." Well did Whately say, "Christ came not so much to *make* a revelation of truth by His own words, as to *be* a Revelation of Truth in His own Person."

As the great moral messages of the Resurrection were brought to men's hearts and consciences by apostles clothed in the authority not of a carnal commandment but of original and inherent truth, instantaneous transformations of personal and social ideals occurred in those who experienced the impact of these tremendous messages. The Pentecostal sermon of Peter, ringing with the note of Resurrection and bringing home the awful facts of Divine Sacrifice for human sin and the reality of personal immortality, produced that searching of heart and that

profound resuscitation of conscience which are reproduced to-day by those in whom have survived the faith, the insight, the simplicity, the self-devotion of the apostolate. Nor was the effect of the apostolic preaching to foster an individualistic interest in personal salvation as in contrast with the large social outlook and the deep social solicitude of Jesus. It has been claimed by the apologists of the new movement which sets the historic Jesus in contrast with the theology of the apostles, that the tendency of the latter is to develope a self-centred religious experience culminating in mechanical evangelicalism, whereas the spirit of the former was to educate a social conscience subordinating self to the larger interests of the kingdom of God. In the light of apostolic history it would appear that this attempted discrimination is academic. Nothing is more striking than the reconstruction of social ideals and the correction of erroneous individualism that occurred as the moral messages of the Resurrection struck the conscience of those who came under the ministrations of the

apostles. In the Fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles is a typical example of this: The narrator points out that upon a certain community the Gospel of Christ Risen was brought to bear in full force. "With great power gave the apostles witness to the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." He then recounts the effects issuing from these presentations. There occurred the concentration of men's minds upon the highest truth. Their thoughts were no longer scattered amidst secondary issues, but converged upon the facts corroborating and consummating the Incarnation of the Son of God: "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one mind." There came with this concentration of interest upon the central fact of Christianity the correction of false individualism by the birth of a new sense of social responsibility. The vision of brotherhood arose, with its correspondence of interests and its community of effort: "Neither said any that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all

things common." And with this birth of the spirit of brotherhood and this new sense of social responsibility came the quickening of desire to use life's resources in the noblest way, placing them at His disposal who had surrendered all things for them, that they through His Death might live unto God. "As many as had lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet." Such were the social effects of the apostolic witness to the Resurrection; such the clarifying of vision, the broadening of social interests, the regeneration of conduct, as men came under the power of a theology that was not heavy with scholasticism, nor technical with sectarianism, but vital with the experience of those "who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead," and who declared "that which they had seen and heard and which their hands had handled, of the Word of Life." What does the Church need more, at the present time, than the dynamic of the apostolic age to certify the Divinity of the Son of God; to bring back

the assurance of personal immortality; to invest the present life with new meaning and eternal value, so that men shall no longer live unto themselves in a complacent assurance of salvation, but, drawn into the fellowship of His sufferings and exalted throughout the whole range of their thinking by the power of His Resurrection, shall henceforth live unto Him who died for them and rose again. So to live means to live for others; to live for the Christianization of the world.

Such was the meaning of apostolic Christology in that First Age, before ecclesiasticism and scholasticism had arisen to confuse and divert the minds of men. Its spirit and its power were determined not by any council of apostles, formulating a system of theology, but by the living Christ Himself, organizing His Church, giving it its commission and its message. He had emerged from the agony and humiliation of His Sacrifice;—He had fully manifested the Father, by tracing the redemption consummated on Calvary to its ultimate root in the fatherliness of God;—He had condemned sin by the offering up of

His own flesh publicly; and now, casting away the fetters of death He had arisen and taken unto Himself His most glorious title—the Saviour of the World. Finally, He had issued to His representatives the Gospel of the Resurrection, for the Christianizing of the world.

Through the slow and painful evolution of His Church the work appointed by Himself has been going on. Many hindrances, personal and institutional, have stood in its way. Ignorance, shortsightedness, shallowness, selfishness, apathy, rivalry, moral defeat are among the personal hindrances that, in one age and another, in one locality and another, have obstructed, postponed, nullified the plan of Christ. Nor have the institutional hindrances been less formidable. While one realizes that the Church could not have had external continuity without her institutions, nor intellectual self-realization without her schools of theology and her dogmatic systems, it is impossible to study dispassionately the history of ecclesiasticism and scholasticism without perceiving how these vast em-

bodiments of human authority and speculation have clogged the buoyancy, confused the simplicity, delayed the accomplishment of the chief end of the Church of Christ—the Christianization of the world.

Yet we must not look narrowly, and with the mind of pessimism on this mysteriously slow and halting evolution of the Christian Church. We must take the largest, broadest view—the only view worthy of those who worship a living Christ. We must believe that these successive reinterpretations of the idea of the Church, with all their disadvantages, have been necessary; and that they have brought discipline and enrichment, without which the vast work yet to be done were not possible. Especially may we hope that the present wide-spread longing in the hearts of men for a simpler and more homogeneous Church means that we are on the verge of recovering that apostolic sense of Christ Crucified and Christ Risen, which can give adequate meaning to that mighty conception, *The Saviour of the World.* It is recorded that our Lord, after His interview

with the woman of Samaria, tarried somewhat in the community where she dwelt, and came in contact with many of the people, who, having first been interested in Him on the report of the woman, finally declared: "Now we believe, not for thy speaking, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the World." It may be that, as the outcome of the various modern movements towards a new appreciation of Jesus, there is at hand a rediscovery of the one coordinating principle, a new apprehension of Jesus Christ as Saviour of the World, which is to be, for the twentieth century, the equivalent of the apostolic spirit and of the apostolic point of view. One cannot believe that the wide-spread sense of need of a fresh and simpler reinterpretation of the Church is either restlessness or radicalism. Rather is it an unformulated conviction, rising everywhere like the tide, that neither ecclesiasticism nor scholasticism contains the vital force needed for the Christianization of the world; and that a recovery of the apostolic power for witnessing to the Resurrec-

tion of the Crucified shall alone bring back into modern life those three fundamental convictions: The Love of God manifested on the Cross of Christ for salvation from sin; the fact of personal immortality attested in the Resurrection of the Crucified; the moral significance of each individual life in the light of its own eternity.

As I study the deepest religious thinking of our time, together with the ebb and flow of contemporary movements for social betterment, I see much that suggests the unpremeditated convergence of many lines of tendency upon Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the World. I shall briefly indicate some of these lines, in closing the present Lecture.

The scientific study of religion is one of the most fruitful disciplines of modern scholarship. Religion has been frankly recognized as a universal phenomenon of human life, and an impartial comparison of its modes of expression as a necessary condition of knowledge of the race. It is interesting to recall the distrust with which the study of comparative religion was regarded

in conservative Christian circles. It was feared that serious interest in the investigation of non-Christian faiths, long denounced by the authority of prejudice as wholly worthless and vile, might impair the supremacy of the Christian religion, and derogate from its prerogative to be an evangel for all nations. It was contended that to treat respectfully the religious conceptions of the Far East was to pay tribute to Satan and to rob Christ of His crown. These ominous predictions have not been fulfilled. The study of the philosophy and history of religion, while it has dissolved many prejudices, corrected many misrepresentations and brought to light many admirable facts touching the religious life of races beyond the confines of Christianity, has most clearly shown the point at which the great non-Christian faiths stop short of power for the thoroughgoing transformation of character, which is salvation. They contain no central personality morally adequate to deal with the conscience, with the heart, with the will. They have no World-Saviour to offer. They are without

the vitality that can give life to the soul dead in trespasses and sins. The more attentively we study them, estimating their fitness to minister to the religious needs of man, the more obvious becomes their moral inadequacy. They have their heroes and their saints, their prophets and their sages, but they have no one to take the place of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World. They have no equivalent for His power to recreate the fundamental instincts and motives of the soul, to purge and reorganize the affections, to endue with the power of the Spirit. The older religions are weakening because of moral inadequacy, and in their weakness are becoming corrupt; they are trying to arrest that process of corruption by assimilating the salt of the ethics of Jesus; while He, standing more conspicuously than ever, before the eyes of the whole race, the Desire of all nations, the Transformer of social ideals, the Regenerator of motives, the Absolver from sin, is extending His influence and multiplying His triumphs as the Saviour of the World. I believe that this extension of

the influence of Jesus Christ as a Saviour is, in these momentous times, advancing more rapidly than our most sanguine estimates of progress. Much of that extension of influence is, as yet, wholly secret. The supremacy of Christ is far wider than the formal acknowledgment of that supremacy.

I observe also, as another of the lines of convergence, the reactions occurring in our time from movements tending to set Christ aside and to substitute some other force to take His place. Many such movements, more or less sharply defined, diversify the life of this alert and individualistic age. Individual minds, or groups of minds, impatient of ecclesiastical restriction and theological dogmatism, feeling that the old methods lag behind the newer thinking, break away into original expedients for reclaiming society and satisfying the higher instincts. The Social Settlement and the Institutional Church sprang from impatience of the lifelessness and inefficiency of ecclesiastical routine. They broke from devitalized methods into naturalness, simplicity, practical

helpfulness. Being in their nature reactionary, they went, in many instances, to extreme positions, in the effort to substitute for the ancient way of the Church, new incentives to the growth of character. As their methods are tested by popular response, it is transpiring as the result of experience that social activity cannot fill the place of Christ; that we may do without the stereotyped methods of ecclesiasticism, but we cannot dispense with the Presence, the example, the teaching, and the redemption of Him whose joy was to immerse Himself in human life, bearing its griefs, carrying its sorrows, lifting it to God.

Another very striking phenomenon of our time is an inclination, diffused through educated circles, to substitute a pantheistic nature-worship for the ancient way of the Church; a non-religious ethics freed from old pious restrictions upon conduct; a satisfaction in culture absolved from the limitations of traditional belief. With this is joined enthusiasm for social reform, and humanitarian charity which boasts its separateness

from the sounding brass of orthodoxy, the tinkling cymbal of ritualism. Viewing this culture-movement from the outside, and superficially, it presents aspects answering to one's own training and temperament. To those who follow with unquestioning obedience the ecclesiastical routine, this breaking away into nature worship seems crude impiety and godlessness; to some who obey the church form, yet with weariness and discontent, this casting off of religious obligation seems a comfortable paganism that escapes a galling yoke of prescribed obedience. In many instances it is neither the one nor the other: neither godlessness nor comfortable paganism. Beneath its surface calm, one who has insight may read many a tragedy of spiritual experience: protest against unsympathetic dogmatism, resentment of sectarian narrowness, exhausted patience under preaching that lacked vision of the eternal essence of truth, revolt against formalism, blind wandering into nature-worship, and, beneath all, unconquerable thirst for the living God, the cry of the soul for pardon

and peace: "O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me!" Withdrawal from unsatisfying ordinances, and unexpressive formulas, is not always worldliness. He who searches the heart beholds such as are seeking a simpler way to Himself, a religious life disburdened of unreality, an approach to Christ like his who leaned upon the Saviour's breast. The Church that most reverently and simply exalts the Saviour of the World, even were it by the silent sign of the crucifix, shall be the Church to which the currents of this reaction from unreality shall turn. The time draws near when the demand for an uplifted Christ —uplifted with the passionate devotion of an apostolic age—shall compel a reconsideration of the Protestant *status quo*—to meet the hunger of those who would recover the Roman veneration for the Redeemer without submitting to the Roman conception of authority.

In the presence of these religious phenomena of our time it is inspiring to recall the onward movements of thought which, with-

out collusion or premeditation, through various channels seem converging to a point where the supremacy of the Saviour of the World shall be shown as at once the aspiration of faith and the verdict of science. Scientific theology is putting its maturest conclusions into a Christology which takes on increasingly the colour and tone of apostolic thought. The revelation of God in Christ has received the scientific connotation: the Christlikeness of God. God is as Christ is. He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. He is then the Saviour of the World in this as in all beside, that He is giving the world the adequate vision of God; He is saving the world from distorted, erroneous, misleading views of duty; He is saving the world by shedding abroad in it the true light concerning Him with whom we have to do. The latest deliverances of scientific theology are but corroborations and amplifications of that magnificent statement: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son; whom He appointed heir of

all things, the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance."[1]

Another onward movement of our time is the growing sense of the world-wide significance of the Incarnation. The momentary reaction from this, produced by the extreme pressure of the historical school to accentuate the synoptical narratives, (an effort which cannot be too highly spoken of save where it attempts to discredit the metaphysic of the Fourth Gospel)—this momentary reaction already subsides; and the Incarnation of the Son of God is being seen in the light of the later anthropology and psychology; disclosing the profound unities that underlie humanity. It is being seen in the light of the world-wide self-consciousness of Jesus Christ. He saw Himself in world-relations; His flesh was, to Him, the bread which He would give for the light of the world. His Death was, to Him, an exaltation above all the local incidents of kinship and country and brief years of ministry, into a Saviourhood for the race, reaching beyond all

[1] Heb. 1 : 1–3.

boundaries, overpassing all lines of cleavage, gathering together in one the whole human family, as the object of His Sacrifice and of His all-comprehending love: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Myself." In these latter days, as East and West are meeting, not in the struggles of war alone, but, far more, in the peaceful and interested interchange of thought, the vastness of the Incarnation is being attested in the extraordinary facility with which minds of every racial type, of every diversity of ancestral custom and belief find it possible to apprehend the spirit and purpose of Jesus Christ. Christ is no more a stranger in any land. He has His disciples everywhere; and, in them all, developes the one type of experience, the one vision of perfection, the one habit of communion with the invisible Saviour. It is the witness of humanity to the Incarnation. It is the answer of a race made in God's image, to its Maker and its Saviour.

LECTURE V

THE CONSTRUCTIVE OFFICE OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

LECTURE V

THE CONSTRUCTIVE OFFICE OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

IT has been pointed out, repeatedly, in the foregoing pages, that these Lectures may be regarded as an attempt to interpret contemporary conditions in the field of religious thinking, and to present an argument for a more clear and simple apprehension of the universal elements of the Christian religion, in order that the Church may more effectively accomplish the work entrusted to her by Jesus Christ, namely, the Christianization of the world.

The critical movement, in its present and prospective effects upon religious thinking, is one of the most momentous elements of the situation. To ignore it is fatal to any attempt to interpret contemporary conditions; for the Christian point of view, especially the Protestant point of view, involves the recog-

nition of the critical movement. To attack it, on the ground of the radicalism of some of its advocates, is to mislead the public mind and to misrepresent as hostile to Biblical religion, its most powerful human aid. Concerning few subjects does more general misapprehension exist. No task is more welcome, and none more appropriate, to the ardent advocate of apostolic theology, than to exhibit the constructive office of Biblical criticism, particularly in its bearing upon a more clear and simple apprehension of the universal elements of the Christian religion. The first and simplest step is to show the relation of the theme of the present Lecture to the general subject under consideration. It is obvious that the Bible is our main source of information touching the elements of the Christian religion. The claim of Biblical criticism is the claim of a right and a duty to obtain direct access to the Bible, for the purpose of gaining first-hand knowledge of our holy religion. The word "criticism," as a description of this claim, is an unfortunate and misleading word, because of the second-

ary associations that have gathered about it. As used in popular speech, particularly in the verbal form, "to criticise," it suggests unpleasantly the inclination to find fault, to raise objections, to point out blemishes. But, as used in its scientific sense, in connection with the study of Holy Scripture, "criticism" means something quite different from fault-finding; something which appears in the structure of the word itself: namely, the exercise of the power of judgment in the pursuit of truth. The claim of Biblical criticism is the claim of a right, which is also a duty, of direct access to the Bible, and of private judgment in the study and interpretation of the Bible, with a view to immediate, and increasingly accurate, knowledge of its contents. Its ultimate end is to disperse misconceptions, and to exhibit truth; by processes involving the highest and most conscientious use of the means of scholarship, in a spirit of intellectual freedom not restrained by ecclesiastical authority, and with reverence suitable in those who are dealing with the materials of a Divine revelation.

It seeks to advance beyond all partisan and sectarian accentuations of specific parts of the Biblical content, and, without controversy, to set forth the universal elements of that world-religion, which, evolved through preparatory stages of Jewish monotheism, attained completeness in the Incarnation of the Son of God, in His Life, Death and Resurrection, and in the apostolic consciousness through which His Person and Work were interpreted in the terms of Christian experience.

It is important to observe what considerations are involved in the claim of criticism that direct access to the Bible is both a right and a duty. Biblical criticism stands for the unrestricted privilege of investigation into whatsoever, from any point of view, concerns our religion, and its documentary and historical sources. Its thesis is: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be made known." It summons to its aid all the resources of the intellect, all the treasures of human knowledge; it claims right of way over every track of science, into every storehouse of facts. It

believes that investigation, so far from being incompatible with reverence, may be an act of worship; that the toil of the scholar may be as sacred as the ministration of the priest.

Biblical criticism represents the effort of the investigator to come personally near to truth and to receive those self-evidencing impressions which are recorded by truth when brought directly to bear upon the seeker after it. It involves the sacred duty of receiving the impact of the Biblical content immediately upon the field of personal consciousness, that the reason, the conscience, the will may bear their witness, as divinely implanted organs of discernment, answering to the divinely given Revelation.

Biblical criticism implies the obligation to permit nothing to stand between the inquiring spirit of man and the Word of God. It cannot recognize churchly authority if that authority, as in the earlier Roman mode, undertakes to check investigation and to impose compulsory interpretation. It cannot be satisfied to adopt confessional declarations about the Bible and its content as substitutes

for personal acquaintance with the sources and personal assurance of their teaching. Every barrier raised before Holy Scripture must give way; and one must stand unfettered and unembarrassed in the presence of the oracles of God, assured that whatsoever is of the truth shall attest itself as the revelation of God; and whatsoever is of man, beset with human infirmity and error, shall not, by any possibility, impair, vitiate, discredit or becloud the eternal and indefectible truth.

The elements here enumerated, as defining the claim of Biblical criticism, represent the most fundamental and most precious principle of the liberty of Protestants, which is, right of access to the sources of truth and of private judgment in its interpretation. This was what Luther and the reformers contended for, as against the demand of the Church to have the custody of the truth, to retain the prescriptive right to announce by authority the interpretation of the truth, for the guidance of the common mind, and to set the interpretation issued by the Church, between

the Bible and the people. The reformers successfully vindicated their principle; but, as time passed on, a new authority grew up in Protestantism, standing between the Bible and the people; namely, the authoritative interpretations of Scripture contained in the denominational catechisms and confessions; together with the unofficial, yet not less binding, consensus of current opinion about the Bible, its structure, its verbal inspiration, the coequal authority and value of all its parts. Of these deliverances and opinions I speak with the greatest possible reverence. They were genuine; noble; necessary. They represented the state of knowledge and belief at various stages in the evolution of Protestantism. But, in the nature of the case, these deliverances and these opinions could not be final. As knowledge grows, as the ever-present Spirit of God works in the minds of men, all official deliverances and all popular opinions concerning Scripture call for review and restatement; not necessarily as requiring correction, and not, assuredly, as casting discredit on those who promulgated them, but

that belief and the expression of it may continuously retain reality, as actual interpretations of eternal truth. It is the most cherished treasure of Protestantism that we are not bound by decrees of councils, but walk in the liberty of the Spirit in the holy garden of the truth. It is the most hallowed incentive to the Christianization of others that we ourselves have received fresh, immediate visions of the essence of our religion, so that with the Samaritans we can say, "Now we believe, for we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the World." Therefore, in the nature of the case, we must always be going back to the sources of our religion; always be studying those sources in the light of new knowledge; always be receiving, in our own consciousness, fresh assurance of the inspiration, the authority, the sanctity of the Biblical revelation. And our guarantee that this liberty of movement, this advance in knowledge and restatement of opinion, shall not lead to individualism and loss of the common truth, must be the abiding Spirit of God, whose function it is to protect,

as well as to illumine, the sources of faith. Apparently there are but two logical methods of procedure: to allow, and to rejoice in, this free access to the Bible and this liberty of interpretation, regarding the standards of the Church as ever open for amendment and restatement; or, on the other hand, to place between the individual mind and the Bible the authority of a church as the official interpreter of Scripture, with power to bind the reason and conscience of the individual. The religious history of the last sixty years is full of impressive illustrations of the play of these two ideas; none more impressive than that presented by the earlier and later Oriel schools at Oxford. From the former spoke the voices of Thomas Arnold, Henry Hart Milman, Richard Whately, contending that the authority and the glory of Scripture are not in the inerrancy of the letter but in the self-evidencing divinity of the content, mediated by the Holy Spirit to the understanding and the affections of believers; requiring not the external sanction of the Church. From the later Oriel school came

the impassioned answers of Hurrell Froude, Edward Bouverie Pusey, John Henry Newman and their brilliant associates, reprobating the principle of Protestant liberty in the use of Scripture and invoking the Church as the divinely appointed interpreter of the sacred oracles. Newman alone, of the later school, was consistent. As he had begun by opposing the liberty of Biblical criticism claimed by the earlier Oriel school, and as he insisted on putting his trust in the authority of ecclesiastical antiquity rather than in the self-evidencing authority of the living truth, he followed, with noble sincerity, the logic of his own convictions, yielding submission to the most venerable Representative of authority and surrendering his right of private judgment to the Holy Mother Church. It is by a study of the points of view of Thomas Arnold and John Henry Newman that one may gain insight into the fundamental question at issue. The life-principle of Protestantism is involved in the claim of Biblical criticism.

If the claim of Biblical criticism has now

been sufficiently defined, as the right and duty of the exercise of judgment in the pursuit of truth, we may proceed to examine the *foundations of criticism.* On what foundations rests this claim, which, to many, seems the most sacred of all claims, taking precedence of all other considerations in the field of intelligent and productive religious thinking? The foundations are partly intellectual and philosophical; partly moral and religious. The intellectual and philosophical foundations underlying the sacred duty of Biblical criticism are identical with the ultimate conclusions of Protestant thought touching the sanctity of the human reason, the unity of the field of knowledge, the nature of authority.

It is an inherent part of the Protestant spirit to reverence the reason, with its powers of investigation, discernment, analysis, estimation of values, judicial determination. It appears to be evidently the gift of God—one might say, the reflection of God in ourselves. It is the image and superscription of the Creator impressed upon the creature; a holy

power, the basis of communion with God. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of wisdom and counsel and understanding. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, a lesser light emerging from the Eternal Light, being of the same substance, partaking of the same qualities. The Spirit of God works through the spirit of man, nourishing the powers of discernment, illuminating the understanding, guiding the judgment. Even so said Christ: "When the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth."[1] This is the true mysticism of Christianity, as distinguished from all mysticism that has moved away from rational lines, into the regions of ecstasy. Christian mysticism is the direct contact of the rational man with the mind of God; the consecration of reason by its Eternal Author; the Divine guidance of thought. Hence the relation of reason to faith, in the mind of true Protestantism. Reason is not a substitute for faith nor a foe to faith. Faith is not blind obedience to external authority. Faith is the highest exercise of intelligence, the sublimest

[1] John 16: 13.

development of reason; faith is the function of judgment carried up to the highest power; it is the "will to believe." The Bible is the noblest and most legitimate object on which this holy power may exercise itself. It is its normal field and province. Devout criticism, the exercise of judgment in the pursuit of truth, is an act as spiritual as prayer.

The unity of the field of knowledge offers another consideration on which the claim of Biblical criticism rests. The Bible is not to be considered as a field of thought marked off from other thought by impassible barriers; it is not a sanctuary covered, like Israel's tabernacle, with veils of separation that seclude it from the common paths of men, and render it inaccessible to ordinary approaches. He who reveals Himself in the Bible is the same that has revealed, and is revealing, Himself in every other department of knowledge. There can be no contradictions in that vast self-revelation. The Bible needs no protection against science. Its content needs no adventitious support as from a theory of verbal inerrancy. The fallibility of the docu-

ments affects in no wise their self-evidencing authority as a channel of the self-disclosure of Him who speaks also in the universe of physical nature, in the sanctuary of the human spirit, in the solemn movement of the evolutionary order, and, supremely, in the Person of the Incarnate Son. Well said one member of that prophetic circle of the early Oriel school: "As we must not dare to withhold or disguise revealed religious truth, so we must dread the progress of no other truth. We must not imitate [those] who imprisoned Galileo; and step forward, Bible in hand, to check the inquiries of the geologist, the astronomer, or the political-economist, from an apprehension that the cause of religion can be endangered by them. Any theory, on whatever subject, that is really sound, can never be inimical to a religion founded on truth; and any that is unsound may be refuted by arguments drawn from observation and experiment, without calling in the aid of revelation. . . . The part of a lover of truth is to follow her at all seeming hazards, after the example of Him who came

into the world that He might bear witness to the truth." [1]

Biblical criticism rests also on certain ultimate convictions concerning the nature of the criteria, credentials and seat of authority that are in accord with the genius of the Protestant ideal. Beyond doubt it is true that the apostles of intellectual liberty have not always been safe guides. In the name of those valid principles, "the freedom of the Spirit" and "liberty of prophesying," extremists have subverted truth, confused the mind of the average, and committed speculative absurdities. Nevertheless the principles, of which they were the momentary and inadequate representatives, abide forever, and in every age reassert themselves spontaneously in the Christian consciousness. Great blessings have come through the organized authority of the Church, blessings apparently unattainable in other ways. The occupation of territory, the continued maintenance of works, the moral impressiveness

[1] Whately, "Essay on *The Love of Truth*," 6th Edition, p. 34 sq.

of venerable institutions, the correction of disorders, the diffusion of knowledge are fruits of organized authority. Nor is it less certain that faith, vital and ample, has been protected and advanced by the regulative action of ecclesiastical authority. Nevertheless the paradox of history stands; it is also true, and, at some periods, conspicuously true that the progress of religion has been arrested and the knowledge of the Bible restricted, not to say perverted, by the interposition between the minds of men and the gracious Word of God, of systems of authority that were self-assertive rather than divinely appointed, contradictory rather than homogeneous. The fundamental interest of Biblical criticism is truth. The fundamental interest of ecclesiastical authority is the maintenance of the *status quo*. Therefore it is of the very essence of the critical principle to challenge every authority, whether of the organized Church, or of tradition, or of popular opinion standing as the interpreter or custodian of Biblical truth, requiring every such authority to show cause why we may

not commit ourselves directly to the Word itself and to the Spirit who breathes and shines therein. True criticism believes in the value of ecclesiastical authority for the promotion of order and the doing of work, but not as an intermediary between the sources of truth and those who, in the freedom of the Spirit, would seek them for themselves and reveal them to others.

The moral and religious foundations underlying the sacred duty of Biblical criticism are not less interesting than those more distinctively intellectual and philosophical. They involve our conceptions of the morality of truth; of the obligation to seek it for ourselves; of the sanctifying effect of truth thus sought and found; and of the immediateness of God, in cooperation with one entirely committed to the sway of truth.

The morality of truth is an inherent property. Truth is fact. It is the thing that is. In the sources of a religion that comes from a Holy God, there can be nothing but fact. Fiction, error, delusion can be no part of the Christian religion. To arrive at truth is to

be emancipated from these. "Ye shall know the truth," is our Lord's promise, "and the truth shall make you free."[1] The most venerable, most cherished error, if, by the advance of knowledge, it be proved to be error, is to be cast away with relief and gladness as an alien thing, having no part in that with which, by tradition or by current opinion, it has been associated. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. This is the morality of truth. Hence we need no intervening authority between us and the Bible; for that which is not true ought not to be sustained by authority of the Church, and that which is true needs not to be so sustained, but is self-demonstrating and self-sustaining.

The obligation to seek truth for ourselves is a part of the moral incentive of Biblical criticism. The attitude of the student, consecrating his rational powers to the study of the thoughts of God, is an appropriate attitude. If God has been pleased to reveal Himself through holy oracles, it is the duty

[1] John 8: 32.

of every mind, according to its gifts, to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the Divine message. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," represents the attitude of devout scholarship no less than the mind of childlike faith. To substitute for the personal authority of conviction the impersonal authority of the churchly declaration is to imperil the reality of faith as well as to diminish its joy. Moreover the history of declaratory authority is not a self-consistent history. The passion of controversy, the dimness of ignorance, the overshadowing of local environments, the masterful diplomacy of leadership, the chances of numbers have had much to do with the theological deliverances of churches. The safeguarding of our own integrity as believers requires us to go back of all confessional statements and, by direct access to the sources of truth, to frame for ourselves a reason for the hope that is in us.

The sanctifying effect of truth thus sought and found constitutes another moral foundation of criticism. In the First Epistle of

Peter[1] occurs a splendid reference to the ethical effect of finding out truth for oneself, consciously holding it, fervently obeying it: "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." Intellectual sincerity is a tonic administered to the moral system, a purgation of the soul. So long as religious conceptions are held or preached with a view to maintaining orthodoxy, the anxiety to receive official sanction may gradually undermine intellectual and moral sincerity, and must surely destroy the vivacity and courage that are brought to the soul by its commitment to truth that has been investigated at first hand and certified by direct experience. It is truth so gained and so assimilated that has power not merely to stimulate the intellect but also to regulate the conscience and to control the will.

The immediateness of God, in cooperation with one entirely committed to the sway of truth, is, perhaps, the deepest foundation of devout criticism. Belief in the Holy Spirit, whom Christ called the "Spirit of Truth,"

[1] I Peter 1: 22.

lies at the root of true criticism. He is the Sanctifier and Certifier of the understanding. He abides in the Word, permeating it with eternal vitality, defending it from the corrosion of untruth. He abides also in the mind of the reverent and fearless student of the Word, making demonstration of its integrity, convincing of its authority, bringing the assurance of faith. Undisturbed by marks of fallibility in the documents, devout criticism advances in the communion of the Holy Spirit, who, safeguarding, glorifying, opening the oracles, uses the agencies of scholarship to dispel error, correct misunderstanding, vindicate and exhibit the indefectible substance of revelation.

Thus far, in this Lecture, I have considered our subject in the abstract, dwelling upon the claim of devout Biblical criticism and the foundations supporting that claim. I would now speak of the spirit and outcome of some of the critical movements of our time. We cannot understand the significance of the time in which we are living, if we refuse to take note of the presence of these great

movements of critical thought; which, while unlike one another in many respects, are alike in this: they represent the claim of thoughtful men to possess the right of direct access to the Bible, and private judgment in its interpretation. We know that wise and good people differ as to the good or evil effects of these movements. Some noble souls resist them with all the energy of conscience, regarding them as tending to impair the authority of Holy Scripture. Others, perhaps not less noble and sincere, rejoice in them, as bringing a more glorious authority to Scripture, an authority not derived from ecclesiastical deliverances, but inherent and self-evidencing. Few thoughtful persons will be found who ignore these movements as unimportant.

To those who study them in the light of the whole evolution of religious thinking in the nineteenth century, they appear to be in the highest sense symptomatic and significant. They are, especially in England and America, a part of a great body of unorganized sentiment, to be found in every denom-

ination, in every university, in every seat of scholarly learning. An impression prevails that we have arrived at the threshold of a new age, wherein the former ruling of sectarian opinion by the objective authority of confessional standards no longer satisfies the demand of many devout minds for a basis of faith and union. There is no hostility to standards as such, as convenient vehicles for the local expression of religious sentiment, but there is a deep sense of their inadequacy to meet the new conditions of thought. A new consensus of opinion and desire is developing, not antagonizing the sectarian *status quo* but rising above it, reaching out beyond it, drawing together in a larger brotherhood of the Spirit those for whom the future with its problems seems more vital and pressing than the conservation of the sectarian differentia. The common object of interest for this widening brotherhood of the Spirit is the Bible, and its relation to the new science, the new philosophy, the new social ideals. There is no special desire to obliterate sectarian lines, or to disturb the historical divisions of Protes-

iveness of Divine Self-revelation, and the boundless capacity of the human mind to assimilate new aspects of that self-revelation. Coleridge dreaded the arrest of development which threatens Christian thought when ecclesiastical orthodoxy is elevated above truth. His position is substantially stated in his twenty-fifth aphorism in the "Aids to Reflection." "He, who begins by loving Christianity better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all." The book itself is a wonderful prophecy of the yearning for reality that breathes through the strongest religious thinking of to-day. Tulloch's characterization is just:[1] "It is a book which none but a thinker on Divine things will ever like. It is such a book as all such thinkers have prized. To many it has given a new force of religious insight, while, for its time, beyond all doubt, it created a real epoch in Christian thought. It had life in it; and the living

[1] *Movements of Religious Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 9.

seed, scattered and desultory as it was, brought forth fruit in many minds."

The same words might be used of that other and later work of Coleridge: "The Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit." It consisted of seven letters to a friend, on the inspiration of the Scriptures. The manuscript was left by Mr. Coleridge, unpublished, at his death. In it, as his kinsman, Henry Nelson Coleridge, pointed out, one finds a summary of his views on Biblical criticism, and an affectionate, pious and wise attempt to place the study of the Written Word on its only sure foundation—a deep sense of God's holiness and truth, and a consequent reverence for that light—the image of Himself—which He has kindled in every one of His rational creatures. The key-note of the volume was the supremacy of the Bible as a divinely inspired literature; and the certainty that the real credential of that divine inspiration is not verbal inerrancy, nor the official declarations of any church, but the tremendous utterance from within it, of the voice of the Spirit of God. He saw that it was a

Book above all other books, "in which deep answers unto deep, and our inmost thoughts and most hidden griefs find not merely response but guidance and assuagement." "In the Bible," he says, "there is more that *finds* me than I have experienced in all other books put together; the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being; and whatever *finds* me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit."[1] In sentiments like these one finds the clue to that gathering volume of feeling and conviction which has organized itself into the several schools of Biblical criticism. It is to be feared that many who have viewed these movements with hostility have not fully taken into account the moral and religious urgency by which they have been impelled. Biblical criticism has been regarded often as a non-religious movement of scholarship; coldly scientific; without reverence; intolerant; self-complacent. Without doubt the spirit of some of its representatives has justified these animadversions. It

[1] Letter II, p. 296, Ed. London, 1904, Geo. Bell and Co.

was inevitable that, in the spread of such a movement, in its fascination for scholars as opening new fields of investigation, in its temptations for men of radical temper to break away from all restraints of traditional opinion and to indulge in the wildest flights of individualism, much should appear that was regrettable from every point of view, and that was horrifying and shocking to those accustomed to regard the Bible with reverence, as the very Word of God. I do not for a moment attempt to conceal or to divert attention from such Biblical criticism as has appeared to be lacking in seriousness, or needlessly radical, or wantonly destructive. I do not attempt to conceal the pain and regret that I have felt by reason of the rude and careless handling of Holy Scripture by some whose lack of reverence was conspicuous, and whose indifference to the historic proprieties, and to the sensibilities of Christian believers was all but gross. But I regard such infelicities as a part of that necessary evil which attends the advance of good. It was inevitable that there should spring up

representatives of the shallowness and incongruity that attend the handling of great subjects by those who have forgotten their greatness. But such criticism can have no effect to the detriment of Holy Scripture. It vanishes with the immediate influence of its authors, as the smaller waves slip back into the sea, from the calm brow of the impregnable rock. The real movement of Biblical criticism is marked by an intense moral obligation, religious reverence and desire for the supremacy of Divine Revelation that impart to its leaders the seriousness of prophets, the awe of priests. It is a movement that perpetuates the spirit of Coleridge, that is inspired with a passionate devotion like his, that counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of the Divine Word, the source and casket of the universal elements of the Christian religion. It is a movement built upon the philosophical and religious foundations that we have been considering in the earlier part of this Lecture. It is a movement that represents the vital principle of Protestantism; the right and duty of

Christians to gain direct access to the Bible, and to bring to bear upon it all the resources of the intellect and of the spirit. It is a movement that has grown up in the hearts of devout men simultaneously with their desire for a more simple and homogeneous interpretation of the Church and of the religion of Jesus Christ. It is a constructive movement. It may have been its duty to oppose or to remove conceptions that had accumulated between the Bible and those who longed to feel the reality of its revelation; but, for the Bible itself, the movement of devout criticism is in the highest sense constructive. Like every movement mediated through fallible men, its methods of procedure and its modes of expression may oftttimes have lacked that thoughtful tenderness for the brethren that clothed the teachings of Christ; and, in the ardour of a great purpose, many things may have been said and done incompatible with the ideal of love; but the healing hand of time, and the magnanimity that is born in them that are led by the Spirit of God, have brought many alleviations and

have obliterated many misapprehensions. The state of knowledge regarding the content of Scripture was never before so rich; the interest in Bible-study never before so great; the conception of revelation never before so intelligent; the sense of Biblical authority never before so profound. To-day the Bible is a Book of life and reality to which educated minds and inquiring spirits turn with an interest not awakened equally by any other object of knowledge. It is difficult to realize the enormous changes that have taken place in the point of view from which this Book of books is regarded. The former apprehension that the authority of the Bible must be impaired if its verbal inerrancy were impugned has passed away from large sections of the church. The fear that the dignity of the sacred volume must suffer, if received opinions touching dates and authorship were revised, no longer oppresses many hearts once sorely troubled. It has become evident that the foundations of Biblical authority lie far beneath the historical and literary structure of the docu-

ments; and that the revision of historical and literary opinion, far from unsettling faith in revelation, tends to purge that faith of fear and doubt, and to advance it into the region of certitude. The mind is disabused of the harrowing thought that the validity of an eternal revelation rests on the precarious basis of immunity from verbal imperfection. It perceives that the commanding witness of the truth resides in its divine message to the moral reason, to the conscience, and to the mysterious longings of the inner soul. That this altered view might, in the fullness of time, come to be the attitude of Protestants towards Holy Scripture, has been for a hundred years the prayer of prophetic souls. They have seen that anything less than this is incapable of effecting that vitalization of religious thinking and that apostolical enthusiasm for the universal elements of the Christian religion which must precede a marked advance towards the Christianization of the world. Yet the change had to come slowly, under the superintendence of the Divine Spirit, and according to the benef-

icent laws of growth. Much remains to be accomplished, but vast advances have been made. It is interesting to recall the words of one of the most saintly of Scotchmen; one whose life was spent in pondering the deep things of God, and who cherished beyond all earthly ambitions the desire that Christ should be glorified. Fifty years have passed since Thomas Erskine of Linlathen wrote thus to Bishop Colenso:[1] "I agree with you on the meaning and purpose of authority in all true teaching. I am sure that so long as we believe anything that is of the nature of a principle merely on outward authority, be it the authority either of God or man, without discerning for ourselves its own truth, we are not really believing it. We may be believing the veracity and the wisdom of our informer, but we are not believing in the truth of the thing he made known to us, until we discern that truth. If I am to be saved or spiritually healed by a truth, I must have my spirit brought into contact

[1] Letters of Thomas Erskine, pp. 397–8, 4th Ed., Edinburgh, 1884.

with the quality and character and reality of that truth, so as to be affected by it in accordance with its proper nature—and any faith which is not fitted to do this is not that which I need. The value of the Bible, according to my reason and conscience, consists in what it contains—in the truth which I find in it—not in the manner in which it was composed." It was in 1858 that Professor Lorimer transmitted to Mr. Erskine, for his opinion, some sheets of a volume on the "Inspiration of the Scriptures," by Dr. John Muir, who endowed the Sanskrit Chair in the University of Edinburgh. The reply of Mr. Erskine is the word of a prophet, gazing far into the future. "It seems to me," he says,[1] "most important to understand the place which the Scriptures really occupy, that so we may make the use of them which they were intended to serve, and be delivered from any superstitious feelings about them. This is specially needed here in Scotland, where a belief in the Bible is often substituted for faith in God, and a

[1] Letters, etc., pp. 400, 401.

man is considered religious, not because he walks with God in his spirit, but because he acknowledges and maintains the verbal inspiration of the sacred canon. I have seen people brought up in this way who would have felt their whole faith in spiritual things annihilated by the discovery of any contradiction or inaccuracy in the Gospel history. A faith of this kind, which rests on ignorance and is dispelled by knowledge, is certainly not the kind of faith which we should desire either for ourselves or others. I agree also with the author of these sheets, that it is desirable that laymen should take up the study of the Scriptures, as they may be expected to be less fettered by prejudice than those who have been brought up within the limits of articles and confessions of faith." Then, as if foreseeing the infelicity and tactlessness of a certain type of criticism, he adds: "I feel all this, but there is another principle which is perhaps liable to be forgotten amidst such thoughts, and it is this, that no man can successfully study spiritual truth except in a spirit of reverence. I be-

lieve that ninety-nine out of a hundred of the religious people of Scotland believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and would have their faith shaken to pieces by the facts which your friend adduces in those sheets. I should like to see them disabused, but I should like this to be done in a way that would transfer their faith from the letter to the spirit, and not destroy their faith altogether." In a subsequent letter to Professor Lorimer,[1] Mr. Erskine makes some additional observations, which are so full of a spirit most needed now, that I cannot forbear to quote them. "The character of God as a teaching Father who eternally desires and seeks the holiness of His reasonable creatures seems to me the great revelation of the Bible, and the true meaning of Christianity. I am prepared to hear any criticisms on the Book, they do not trouble me in the least. I have found a medicine which heals me; I have found an omnipotent Friend—a Friend who is the eternal enemy and will be the eternal conqueror, of all

[1] Op. cit., pp. 404, 405.

evil, and who will neither spare Himself nor us any suffering which may be necessary to this result. This is the pearl of great price, which when a man has found he needs not that any other should tell him its value, he knows it and feels it; he does not need any evidence that this revelation of the character of God is a true revelation; he knows it must be true, or his own existence, his own consciousness, is a lie. If any textual emendations or any improved translation could bring this truth into clearer light, I should welcome them with my whole heart. Even without this unspeakable advantage I welcome them; but I have often been disappointed by finding that men who were zealous for the critical processes were comparatively cold to this, without which these processes are mere matters of philology. Now if I were to attempt a crusade it would be for this truth, and not for the philology, because I should like to concentrate the thoughts and hearts of men upon it."

I have made these extended citations from Erskine both because they show the normal

attitude of an intensely evangelical mind to the vitalizing function of devout Biblical criticism, and because they prepare the way for the final effort of this Lecture: namely, to summarize certain of the constructive results of the critical movement.

In the nature of the case, the results of an intellectual movement are progressive, and can never, at any point, be tabulated as final. Life means change of aspect, change of relationship, change of function. Consequently no result of the critical movement can be alleged as closed beyond the possibility of being reopened. This, far from invalidating the movement, imparts to it a sublime analogy to that ever expanding revelation of truth which is the basis of critical investigation. Nevertheless, in the century of English and American thought that has passed since Coleridge, with a prophet's hand, wrote the "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit," we have advanced far enough to begin to sum up some of the substantial gains to vital Christianity, accruing from this profound effort to attain reality in connection with knowledge,

external and internal, of the sacred Scriptures.

The removal of the idea that the Bible is a Book protected by the Church from scholarly investigation is one of the substantial gains of the critical movement. The ages of relative ignorance, preceding the revival of learning, were, in the nature of the case, menaced by strong tendencies to superstition and to the growth of erroneous popular opinion. The immature and unsettled civilization of Europe fostered traditions of paganism, which, upon the fertile breeding-ground of illiteracy, might choke the word, like tares overwhelming wheat. There appeared, therefore, to be a certain august propriety in the assumption, by the Church, of a protectorate over the Bible; withholding it from the masses, who, in blindness, might wrest the Word unto their own destruction. The Church, a holy and wise Mother, considering the frailty and dullness of the common mind, exercised judicious discrimination in entrusting the Bible to untrained persons; and, in all cases, deemed it her bounden duty to affirm by authority and

to regulate by decisions of council the meaning and use of that which was written. Although, in the view of a later age, the Church before the Reformation was not exempt from the inroads of superstition in her interpretation of Scripture, there can be no question of the beneficence of Catholicism, as an autocratic director of the thoughts of those incapable of thinking for themselves. But, with the new intellectual conditions that sprang into being with the revival of learning and the growth of universities in Europe, the fitness of the old order diminished. The protection of the Bible from the mad vagaries of illiteracy was just and honouring to the sacred deposit committed to the Church. The protection of the Bible from scholarly investigation, was, on the other hand, the gravest of mistakes, the most hazardous adventure of zeal without knowledge. For, with the growth of scientific principles, and the enthusiastic application of them to all other departments of the knowable world, a policy, whether Catholic or Protestant, of segregating the Scriptures within the veil of

mysterious sanctity could not but produce lamentable results. Intellectual scepticism looked with distrust on documents sheltered by the pallium of churchly protection from the recognized procedure of criticism; and turned indifferently from the moral and religious message of a Book whose historical foundation was untested and unproven. A religion of the Spirit was despised as unworthy of men of candour, because it seemed to hide itself from the open field of attested knowledge, behind the shadowy refuges of untrustworthy tradition and pious opinion. It should be pointed out, however, that the conservative instinct to suspect the motive of critical scholarship, and to impute to it hostility to the Bible, was neither ignoble nor unreasonable. The Bible is the most precious treasure in the possession of Protestantism. It is the ample equivalent of all that was surrendered by the Reformers on its behalf. It conditions faith and worship and conduct. It is the lamp, the bread, the guide of the believers. It is wrought into the fibre of civilization and enshrined in the inmost

sanctuary of experience. Well might the advances of scholarship, and the curious eye of investigation be met with distrust, alarm, resistance. Conservative hostility towards Biblical criticism has animated some of the noblest souls of this and other times, and was, for them, a sentiment not of ignorance nor of reprehensible prejudice, but of reverence and devotion. They sought to guard from profanation the shrine of God's self-revelation; to preserve unwasted the precious heritage of His people. But, as time passes, God reveals a more excellent way. Not by the resistance of scholarship, but by invoking its services is the authority of truth disclosed. Not by protecting the letter, but by exalting the spirit of revelation is the message of the Word of God invested with a power that none can gainsay or withstand. The future authority of that message is to be something of which the world dreams not. Greater triumphs await the Bible than even the greatest of the past.

Another substantial gain of criticism is the recovery of human reality for the great personages of Biblical history. It is character-

istic of an age addicted to legend and indifferent to history to envelope its leaders in an atmosphere of pious mystery; to set them apart from the plane of common life, esteeming its incentives and its experiences too commonplace to satisfy the hero-worshipper. The deification of men in the ever-multiplying castes of popular Hinduism; the beatification of individuals in the Christian Church are analogous to the kind of reverence which elevated the personages of Biblical history to a plane apart from ordinary life. If the Bible was in every word and syllable the immediate utterance of the Spirit, the figures on the field of Divine narrative were also unique. They could not be men of like passions with ourselves. It is interesting to recall the disfavour visited upon Dean Milman's "History of the Jews," because he, following Ewald, invested patriarchs and prophets with the literal nature and idiosyncrasies of men, and brought them forth from the gloaming of mysticism into the light of common day. No words can overstate the blessing that has come

from this recovery of realism for the personages of Holy Scripture. Were the interests of historical scholarship alone considered, the gain would be great. But far beyond this extend the moral and religious effects of critical realism. Once again we have a Bible that is a chronicle of lives. Its personages, being dead, yet speak to us with the appealing voice of actual human experience. We can understand them; can feel with them and for them. They become interpreters of our own lives and of the lives of others. They illuminate the deeply travelled passages of evil and good, sin and righteousness, sorrow and joy, the service of self and the service of God.

The life of our Blessed Lord has become real in corresponding measure. He has ceased to be but a sacred institution of theology; He has become our Master and our Brother, whose hand touches us, whose voice talks with us by the way, whose gentle figure, wrapped in the bournoose of an Oriental, walks by our side in this our earthly pilgrimage. With ever-deepening apprehension of their truth

the Bible students of to-day apply to themselves the words: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

The recognition of Revelation as progressive is another substantial gain of criticism. So long as a standard of Biblical interpretation was maintained by authority whereby coequal religious insight was attributed to all parts of canonical Scripture, the inscrutable nature and perplexing contradictions of certain portions discouraged thoughtful readers. But, with the development of Biblical science came the study of religion, including the study of early Judaism in the light of its historical antecedents, combined with increased certainty on many points modifying the traditional view of the religious institutions of Israel. Prophets and psalmists were located in their actual environments; the centuries immediately preceding the Advent of our Lord were investigated; the current conceptions reflected in the discourses of our Lord and in the

writings of His apostles were analyzed; and, as a resultant from this research, a light brighter than the sun has poured upon the august fact of Divine self-revelation, showing it to be in its nature and action progressive, evolutionary, cumulative, emerging in the midst of the shadows of paganism, progressing as through the fitful and illusive stages of the dawn, broadening and deepening the current of its outpouring, growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day; rising at length in full-orbed splendour at the Advent, and giving promise, through the infinite possibilities of the dispensation of the Spirit, of things yet to be that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man."

Concurrently with this clearing conception of the progressive nature of Divine revelation, has come a profounder sense of the nature and evidence of inspiration. It may be true that scientific criticism has accomplished what Thomas Erskine predicted half a century ago: faith in the verbal inerrancy of Holy Scripture, as the credential of inspira-

tion is a belief that "must be shaken to pieces by the facts adduced." But, as Thomas Erskine saw, in his intense devotion to the Word of God, the nature and evidence of inspiration are more profound and more vast than any question of words: they inhere in the revelation itself, as a disclosure of the living God; they demonstrate themselves, not to the literary judgment of the scholar chiefly, but primarily, to the original and intuitive perceptions of the soul; so that a man "does not need any evidence that this revelation of the character of God is a true revelation; he knows it must be true, or his own existence, his own consciousness, is a lie."

Finally: the crowning gain of the critical movement is the enrichment of our conception of the Person of Christ. Historical criticism has brought to pass what may almost be described as a Second Advent of the Incarnate Lord. He has been given back to us; He has come again to them that are His own; bringing with Him, into the field of full, immediate, vital realization all the immeasurable glory of word and deed, of teach-

ing and example, of personality and influence that were given to the world in the Palestinian Advent. Overwhelmed for the time being by the abundance of the historical revelation, enthralled by the majestic sweetness that sits enthroned upon the brow of the incarnate Jesus, the religious thinking of our time has not yet fully coordinated the Jesus of the Synoptists with the Christ of St. Paul and St. John —has not yet fully identified (if I may use the noble suggestion of Forrest) "the Christ of history" with "the Christ of experience." But this identification, this coordination, is coming and coming rapidly into the front of religious thinking. It is to be the glory of the next great reinterpretation of the Church; the key to the Christianization of the world. The triumphant Jesus, crowned with many crowns, is even now, and in the terms of our strongest and richest thinking, progressively revealing Himself to the consciousness of a faith that blends learning with reverence. To the twentieth century as to the first He shall be "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last."

LECTURE VI

THE LARGER CHURCH OF CHRIST

LECTURE VI

THE LARGER CHURCH OF CHRIST

IN this Lecture we reach the consummation of our purpose, described at the outset as "an attempt to interpret contemporary religious conditions." We must look back on the path leading hither. We have seen that Christ has invested the Church with the duty of Christianizing the world; a duty which, with varying measures of insight and earnestness, the Church has undertaken to discharge. We have assumed that the Divine ideal of the Church, as the agent of this great mission to humanity, was present, in perfect form, in the mind of Christ only; and that the history of the Church, since the Ascension of Christ, has been a series of re-interpretations of that ideal, more or less limited in scope and adequacy, yet tending to increase in breadth, with the evolution of Christian knowledge and experience. We

have noted, as a characteristic of the present time, a widely spread, unorganized desire for a fresh reinterpretation of the ideal of the Church; representing in some form an improvement upon the existing Protestant *status quo*. This desire is not for an institutional union under one central authority, nor for a confessional union, under one authorized symbol of belief, but, apparently, for a common advance of all branches of the Church towards greater simplicity in holding and propagating the essential message of the Gospel. We have found that, at the heart of this sentiment, is a growing appreciation of the essence of Christianity, as contained not merely in the historical presentations of the Synoptists, whereby the humanity of Jesus is certified, but equally in the substance of the apostolic Christology, which exalts Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, the Saviour of the World. We have observed, finally, that this wide-spread appreciation of the universal elements of the Christian religion, as distinguished from local and sectarian accentuations of selected doctrines, has developed

simultaneously with the critical movement and, apparently, in connection with it. The fundamental Protestant principle of the right and duty of direct access to Holy Scripture, upon which the critical movement rests, has recovered its supremacy, with the result that the authority of sectarian confessional statements has undergone important modifications. Biblical theology is proving to be an irenic messenger to our time, gathering around the central unities of the faith those who once were parted by the barriers of dogmatic ecclesiasticism. Churchly authority is powerless to arrest the unifying influence of Biblical theology. Those whom God has joined together in the vision of common truth, the tradition of the sect cannot put asunder. Nor can those who have been joined in the vision of common truth ever again lapse contentedly into former beliefs touching the finality of sectarian distinctions. They have seen the splendid outlines of a greater Church, and, forevermore, must move towards it, in heart and mind. Like the seer of the Apocalypse, they have seen the " Holy

City coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God most precious." Henceforth they must live in the spirit of that larger interpretation of the Churchly ideal and must labour for its accomplishment on earth. It is not that they have discarded any heritage of the past, but that they are bound, by the calling of God, to reach forth to those things that are before. It is the purpose of this Lecture to examine this conception of the larger Church of Christ, which, for many, represents the next reinterpretation of the ideal. Sixty years have passed since the Reverend W. G. Ward, a fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, published a book bearing the significant title: "The Ideal of a Christian Church, Considered in Comparison with Existing Practice." Himself a clergyman of the Church of England, Ward's "Ideal" was, substantially, identical with that of Rome. It is interesting to recall the reprobation of Ward's position by Mr. Gladstone. But one remembers Ward's book and the essay of his distinguished critic, chiefly as landmarks wherefrom to measure the dis-

tance traversed in sixty years of progressive religious thinking. The fundamental positions, of both author and critic, suggest little that relates itself to the present state of Biblical knowledge, the modern conception of authority and the new outlook upon the world in the light of the science of comparative religion. Nevertheless, Ward's title: "The Ideal of a Christian Church, Considered in Comparison with Existing Practice," is serviceable, as suggesting how the Church is ever being saved and regenerated through the influence of ideals that rise far above existing practice and open to the eye of faith new vistas of possibility.

As a preparation for our view of a larger Church of Christ, it is appropriate to reflect upon certain indirect results of the critical movement, to some of which more or less extended reference already has been made.

Increasing sense of brotherhood in the truth is one of the notes of the present time. It is that which takes the place of the sectarian spirit. The sectarian spirit is either aggressive or segregative. In its aggressive

form it assails the theological position of others and seeks to make converts to its own. It compasses sea and land to make one proselyte. In its segregative form, the sectarian spirit ensconces itself within the stronghold of orthodoxy, zealous to maintain an unimpaired body of doctrine; its interest is with its own affairs; it is indifferent to the problems of criticism, or looks out upon them with disfavour as evidences of popular unrest which rashly reopens questions closed by authority. This spirit, once generally held to be a normal expression of religious earnestness, has now given place in many quarters to one in every respect its opposite. The sense of brotherhood in the truth is a state of mind neither aggressive for proselytism nor segregative for self-protection. It is full of activity and effort, but there is nothing in its activity analogous to the zeal of the sectary to bring others into line with his opinions. The activity is wholly on behalf of truth: it represents the spirit of Isaiah's phrase, "valiant for the truth upon earth." It considers the truth

to be that which is good, and worthy and necessary; the only thing that can satisfy man and save the world. The truth is no man's private possession nor is it established by the authority of any man or party. To bring others under its influence is not proselytism. Furthermore, the truth is to be followed as a leader, whithersoever it goeth. It is not bound by man's attempts to define it and to enforce those definitions as absolute. It advances, going before the docile mind, a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. Brotherhood in the truth is a relationship devoid of self-interest and uninfluenced by party ends. It is frank, guileless, sincere; it knows nothing of rivalry; it is not vexed when temperamental tendencies lead to variation in modes of expression. It is a comprehensive, generous fellowship, in the spirit more than in the letter. Back of it lies the conviction that God, who ordained these temperamental variations, must intend, by means of them, to effect a broader revelation of the truth.

The growth of a larger conception of the missionary function is another note of the present time. It is closely connected with the sense of brotherhood in the truth. As that represents the reversal of the sectarian spirit in matters of belief, so this represents the reversal of the sectarian aim in missions. More or less intentionally, Protestant evangelization has been identical with sectarian propagation. No other method of procedure suggested itself to the earlier organizers of missions to the East. None other now appears, to large bodies of Christians, to be capable of producing practical results. Christianity, being regarded as synonymous with a specific denominational expression of it, the function of the Christianizer in the East becomes inseparable from that of the denominationalist at home. He becomes also the denominationalist in the East. Whether these specialized interpretations of a universal religion can wisely be pressed as having authority over the Eastern consciousness, or whether it be the way of the Spirit to gather the sheep of

the East into folds of the West, are questions that scarcely occurred to the earlier promoters of missions; that scarcely occur now to those for whom churchmanship and cherished symbols of orthodoxy are coequal with the essence of religion. The reasonableness of such an attitude is obvious. Generations of sectarian heredity create a state of settled conviction predetermining methods of procedure. The denominationalist in the East is a purely logical expression of his intellectual antecedents. Nor can too much praise be given to many denominational missionaries for the moderation, breadth and insight with which they have done, or are doing, their work. Yet, as a sense of brotherhood in the truth gently supplants the aggressive or segregative energies of sectarianism it supplies a new point of view, and opens new questions, the reconstructive effect of which on missionary policy will be suggested to the mind by the later portions of this Lecture.

An enlarged conception of the meaning and value of the world is another note of

modern religious thinking. It stands in contrast with the mediæval spirit, which, in effect, was a reaction from Greek and Roman estimates of life. To both Greek and Roman the world was a prize to be grasped after. The Grecian love of the world was expressed in terms of æstheticism: Beauty of form; colour and warmth of personality; grace of motion; glorious energies of the body; the rhapsody of sensuous existence; poetry; dialectic; philosophy; oratory. The Roman love of the world uttered itself in the terms of authority. The advance of civilization, casting up highways in the desert, striking through the wilderness the radii of aqueduct and military road; imperial colonizations; the majesty of conquest; fundamental principles of law and jurisprudence. To Greek and Roman, each according to the temper and tradition of his race, appeared the splendour and value of the present world. Upon the spirit of mediæval Christianity, rising on the ruins of pagan empires, fell a reaction that reversed all world values. To the Ro-

man's haughty joy in power, and the Greek's sensuous and sunny idolatry of life succeeded a sinister ecclesiasticism that affected to view the world with the frown of reprobation. It lay under the wrath and curse of God. The fires of judgment were already kindled. The day of wrath was at hand. Sinners against light, together with the unnamed myriads of heathendom, were to be swallowed up, as in the pit of hell. Salvation lay in separation from the world and its accursed works; in the purifying of the soul by acts of discipline; in the vow that built one in, as behind ramparts of stone, from fellowship with the ungodly multitude. To say that this mediæval contempt of the world measurably projected itself into the reformed theology and affected both the line of its activity and the colour of its thinking is to say only the truth. The English evangelicals of the eighteenth century were the reproduction in Protestantism of mediæval zeal to attain personal salvation by trampling on an evil world, already blasted with the curse of God, and

ripening for the harvest of retribution. How enormous and how blessed is the advance of modern thinking from this view of the world! The protest against pagan materialism that was involved in the mediæval attitude of mind has not been revoked. Now as then it is recognized that the prince of this world hath nothing in Christ; that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life are enemies that war against the soul, and that whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus must crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. But the old *contemptus mundi* has given place to a sentiment more in keeping with the spirit of Him who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. A deep reverence for the world as the object of God's love and sorrow, and the scene of His perpetual Presence suffuses modern religious thinking, imparting to it a tone of sacrificial tenderness. All human life is invested with immediate importance and value. Nothing is common or unclean. Salvation by self-seclusion be-

comes a secondary interest. Salvation by self-immersion in the life of the world has become the chief incentive of the Christian: "non ministrari sed ministrare."

An advance in realizing the immanence of God and the universal activity of His Spirit is another mark of the existing religious situation. To suppose that the sense of God's immanence is peculiar to this time would be erroneous. It has been present in chosen souls from the beginning. Six hundred years ago the far-visioned Tauler quotes with joy the ancient word of Augustine: "Whatever is true, by whomsoever it is spoken, proceeds from the Spirit of God." The same conception was with the Cambridge Platonists, and with Fénélon and with all who have assimilated the fundamental principle of true mysticism: God's immediate and unrestricted access to the spirits of His children. But the significance of God's immanence has appeared to this generation as to none of its predecessors. The critical study of the sources of Oriental religions, the wider acquaintance with holy aspirations and experi-

ences occurring beyond the zone of Christian influence, have not only added to our knowledge of man but have deepened our knowledge of God. That the activity of His Spirit is more mysteriously diffused than an earlier age supposed; that the relations of human souls with God transcend the limits set by theological opinion; that the plan of God for the religious development of the world stretches out beyond our narrow churchmanship, as the immensity of the sea stretches out beyond the moles and jetties of our harbour-ways—these are among the momentous implications attaching to the immanence of God in the light of the scientific study of religion.

When we group these foregoing thoughts —all of them indirect results of the critical movement: increasing sense of brotherhood in the truth; enlarged conception of the missionary function; a diviner estimate of the meaning and value of the world, and a broader understanding of the immanence of God and the universal activity of His Spirit —we realize that, under the law of propor-

tion and adjustment we are prepared to entertain an ideal of the Christian Church constructed on lines larger and broader than any that have determined the Churchly ideals of the past. There is nothing radical or revolutionary in the anticipation of such an ideal as the measure of the Church that is to be. The ideal arrives on the field of consciousness in the fullness of time as the next member in a normal sequence, suggested not by the heated imagination of optimists but by the logic of history and by the prophetic intimations that appear, at home and abroad, in the unique religious situation of the world.

There is nothing new or strange in the thought of a larger Church of Christ. The law of the past is the law of an ever enlarging conception of what the Church is designed to stand for. The past has witnessed the outgrowing of one ideal after another, as intellectual and moral conditions have changed; the putting away of that which had become inadequate; the taking on of that which, to an ever advancing race, seemed more commensurate with its development.

Nothing is more impressive than to reflect upon this phenomenon. With the progress of the centuries one churchly ideal after another has been outgrown and unconsciously has yielded up its supremacy; to be, henceforth, an incident in a movement of thought yet broader in scope and more spiritual. Instinctively one recalls four venerable names, each one of which rises like a pillar of witness on the plain of history, commemorating a churchly ideal that, to its adherents, seemed final; yet beyond which, to some conception more majestic and more spiritual, religious thinking has projected itself, impelled by the Spirit of truth. Jerusalem—Constantinople — Rome — Geneva! How magnificent are the associations of these names with the higher life of the race! What suggestions they present to the student of religion! What witness they bear to the power of religion in the development of the world!

Jerusalem! No name, it may be, in the entire nomenclature of the world, holds in itself more abundantly the quintessence of

religious passion; not Rome, with its august tradition, not Benares, with its overpowering realism of devotion. Upon Jerusalem rested the immediate benediction of God. Towards Jerusalem went forth a sacred energy of love that lives unspent, after twenty centuries of absence, in many of the house of Israel; and dims the eye with tears, at mention of the beloved name. Not in the literature of devotion is there a passage more splendid than the immortal yearning of the exile: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Jerusalem stands for the Jewish churchly ideal; the ideal of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their successors; the ideal that lived like an Apocalypse before the imagination of the prophets; that neither idolatrous lapses, nor dispersion, nor exile could utterly abolish and destroy. It was the conception of a segregated nation, sifted out, set apart, nurtured and protected. The favourite of Jehovah; the sole possessor of the truth; the apple of His eye, the name

engraven on His heart,—well might the churchly ideal that focussed at Jerusalem cause the hearts of its adherents to thrill with holy satisfaction. The words of the Deuteronomist[1] do justice to that ideal: "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." The attitude towards the world, encouraged by such a churchly ideal, was characteristic. From his secure position in "the mountain of the Lord's house" the Jew looked out upon the nations and despised them. Their thoughts, their deeds, their prayers, their gods were altogether vanity. As Christianity arose out of Judaism, the inherited tendency to segregation clung to it. A great cosmopolitan, like St. Paul, could break loose from the tendency, could turn to the Gentiles; could recognize, in Greek and Roman, the offspring of God. But for men of less independence and more subservience to tradition it was not easy to grasp the idea

[1] Deut. 7: 6.

that God had unto the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. Many beside Peter needed the admonition "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common."[1] Centuries have passed, yet from time to time there are local reversions to the Jewish ideal, as the ardour of sectarianism utters itself in ecclesiastical claims which imply exclusive prerogatives of ministry, or monopoly of revealed truth.

Less impassioned yet not less impressive are the associations that invest the name Constantinople as a way-mark in the evolution of churchly ideals. The Greek conception of Catholicity (as was pointed out in an earlier lecture) magnified the eternal unities of thought above the temporalities of visible empire. The Holy Orthodox Church became the designation of Eastern Christianity. The canons of metaphysic were, to the Christian thinkers of Asia Minor, what the furnishings of the Most Holy Place were to Israel, sacred essentials of faith and worship. The glory of the Church was commensurate with its

[1] Acts 10 : 15.

homogeneity in the manner and method of formulating truth. Doctrine, approved and issued by authority, became absolute, in form as well as in substance. Whosoever should think otherwise was accursed. As a governmental conception in the field of religion, the regulation of thought by authority, was, in itself, magnificent. It simplified by an imperial method the problems of theology, forbidding men to think otherwise than in conformity to approved standards. It stood before the impulse that, in every age sets, like the tide, towards higher grounds of knowledge, and said: Thus far shalt thou go and no farther. It pursued methods for the repression of heresy and the extirpation of heretics, holding it of supreme importance to purge the Church of irregular proclivities. Even more obviously than the Jewish instinct of segregation has the Greek conception of intellectual authority maintained its place throughout the evolution of the Christian Church. It passed over into Protestantism with power, and became one of the most prominent characteristics of the sectarian *status quo.*

Its relative reasonableness, and its great service to the cause of truth must be recognized by unprejudiced minds. The self-realization of the Church, collectively, and in its parts, has been attained largely through official deliverances, representing the mind of the majority. The guidance of the uninstructed average, who, in matters of Biblical interpretation and theological belief are strikingly dependent, has come about through catechetical definition, supplied by authority. The limitations in the system appear when the guardians of orthodoxy undertake to repress thought and to punish thinkers. Acts of discipline, and executions of judgments are at all times possible; but the whole history of dissent and independency witnesses to the inalienable liberty of the intellect and the ineradicable right of private judgment; whereby the field of religious opinion forever broadens, and the truth-seeker, being blocked at one path, turns to another; constrained by conscience, and by the Spirit of God, to endure as seeing Him who is invisible.

Outwardly and visibly, not Jerusalem and

not Constantinople represents an ideal of the Church so august as that which is associated with the name, Rome! Born within a city, than which only Delhi in India is more rich in memorials of imperial leadership; erected on lines suggested by the superb ambition of deified emperors, the papal conception of the Church appeals, as none other yet has appealed, to the imagination of the Western Hemisphere. From a central seat of empire to the ends of the habitable world, radiates an infallible and unquestioned dictatorship. A man, chosen by the votes of a college of cardinals, assumes the functions of a vicar of Christ on earth and exercises the terrific prerogatives of a viceroy of God. Having the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with power to bind and to loose, this central incarnation of authority is represented by an innumerable priesthood, appearing in every land, speaking every language, assimilating the peculiarities of every environment, yet surrendering under no circumstances the distinctive marks of ecclesiastical identity. In this priesthood inheres sacramental grace,

and disciplinary power. It is competent to explore the hidden chambers of the soul, and to receive confidences that one may breathe only into the ear of God. It has power to inflict penalty for sin, and to pronounce absolution from guilt. It is its duty to determine the action of conscience, to impose the boundaries of belief, to regulate devotion, to work the perpetual miracle of the altar. It meets the soul at its birth into the world, and determines its character by baptismal mysteries. It attends it amid the shadows of death and dismisses it into eternity with holy anointings. It projects its authority beyond the grave and alleviates the trial of the intermediate state. It claims affiliation with powers of the unseen world, with glorified saints, and with the Mother of God, whose intercessory ministrations are given at its request. It stands between Holy Scripture and the frailty of human wisdom; expounding the oracles of God, determining, with indefectible certitude, the nature and content of truth. Such, in effect, is the venerable Roman ideal, realized in forms of

magnificence, in institutions of adamantine stability, in organizations of marvellous intricacy and efficiency; in statesmanlike leadership.

The sublimity of these several conceptions of the Church of Christ is unquestionable. Whether we consider the solemn separatism of the Jewish ideal, as that of a people purchased by the Most High for His own possession, and set on the holy hill of consecration, above the apostasy of the world; or the intellectual sovereignty of the Greek ideal, as the custodian of truth, waiting ever as a watchman to guard the shrine of revelation and to repel the curious advances of an unsanctified reason; or the imperial absolutism of the Latin ideal, wielding the sceptre of infallibility, we find ourselves in the presence of that which appeals to our sense of grandeur and dignity. It is easy to account for the enormous part played by religion in the affairs of the Western world when we remember the sublimity of its chief historical interpretations. Yet great as they were, and as they are (for the spirit of each of these

interpretations of the churchly ideal is continuously represented in the evolution of Christianity), the world has outgrown them. Great as they are, they are not great enough to meet that ideal of a Christian Church that comes with the growth of true democracy, which is the fruit of intellectual light and liberty. Not Jerusalem, nor Constantinople, nor Rome, with all their pomp, represents an ideal so stately in its simplicity, so broad in scope, so spiritual in its tone as that which is summoned to the mind by the name, Geneva! The ideal of Protestantism was born with the rebirth of scholarship in Europe. It developed in the bracing atmosphere of intellectual activity and ethical virility. It grew up in minds not intimidated by the threatenings of hereditary power and the intolerant absolutism of vested rights. It represented courage of conviction, spirituality of mind, obedience to conscience, human brotherhood, direct experience of the grace of God. It felt that the freedom of the sons of God, with all its untrained simplicity and liability to error, was more precious than the most

ancient ceremonial joined with subservience to questionable authority. The churchly ideal of Protestantism stands for the liberty of the Spirit; the individual rights of believers; the freedom of faith and worship, according to the dictates of conscience; the priesthood of Christ alone; diversity in unity as the normal life of the Church; the many sects with their rights of divergence; the one brotherhood of the common truth.

It is indeed a great ideal, in its fidelity to nature, its appeal to intellectual life, its moral authority, its wealth of religious development. The order of nature inclines towards differentiation; "one star differeth from another star." The principle of natural selection enters into the fundamental processes of life; enriching it, and extending its scope. The hidden tendencies that result in the origin of species are among the most characteristic phenomena of nature. Thus she works; maintaining within all her larger unities differences that represent the flexibility of organic life, and the versatility of the guiding Mind that finds expression in the manifoldness of

the universe. The ideal of Protestantism presents an analogy in the realm of the Spirit to the law of natural selection in the physical world. And because of the unity of nature in all realms, the truth of the analogy appears in the enormous enrichment of the religious life of the West by means of the flexibility and versatility of Protestantism. Beyond doubt there were great values conserved by the massive homogeneity of the Roman Church. Nevertheless the reversion to natural selection in religion was inevitable. Had not the crisis occurred that aroused the spirit of Luther, the reversion must sooner or later have come to pass, for the wind that bloweth where it listeth cannot be bound by the edicts of human authority.

In its appeal to the intellectual life the genius of Protestantism has great power. The argument of Cardinal Newman in the *Grammar of Assent* may accomplish the intellectual self-surrender of individuals, but such instances must remain sporadic and exceptional. Liberty of the mind is normal; and, whereas servitude to absolute authority, if

long continued, may beget a kind of hereditary passivity, sometimes mistaken for contentment, the instinct of mental life recovers consciousnesss at the touch of knowledge, and struggles for emancipation. The strength of Protestantism as a churchly ideal lies, in part, in its relative recognition of the instinct of intellectual liberty. Where it has done justice to this instinct it has prospered. Where it has withheld justice it has brought on revolutions within itself, the outcome of which has been on the side of liberty. Nor do these successive victories of liberty lead to disintegration. They lead but to a larger interpretation and a more spiritual apprehension of fundamental principles. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." [1]

The moral authority of Protestantism in the lives of individuals is closely connected with its appeal to the intellect. As that appeal rests upon truth itself rather than upon the action of a Church promulgating and defining truth, so the ethical sanction of truth as truth is the controlling principle in thought

[1] 2 Cor. 3: 17.

and conduct. There is, for the true Protestant, no external custodian of the conscience, no spiritual director acting in the name of a Church. Like Moses in Horeb, called into the cloud-capped presence-chamber of Jehovah to receive from His hand the oracles of righteousness, the moral authority of Protestantism is, for one who rightly apprehends it, the unmediated contact of mind and conscience with truth as truth. There is no priest to say: This is right, that is wrong. There is no Church empowered to pronounce absolution or to decree measures of penance. There is but the Spirit of truth, dealing immediately with the moral nature. That torch lights the path of conduct and divides good from evil. That sword pierces to the dividing of joints and marrow, dissecting and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart.

As a result of these and other characteristics the Protestant churchly ideal provides for a great wealth of religious development. Many types of experience appear among the manifold influences of Protestant institutions; many forms of worship evolve through the

free action of diverse temperaments; many intellectual variations occur in the apprehension of truth. These, in earlier stages, produced bitter rivalries and contentions, which, under the ripening influence of time and the growth of a broader world view, are passing away. The true glory of Protestantism appears in varieties of religious development, finding modes of self-respecting expression consistent with the law of Christian love and the duty of Christian cooperation at home and abroad.

There is reason to think that at no period since the Reformation has the churchly ideal of Protestantism been more nearly realized than at present. In its naturalness and flexibility, in its evident sympathy with intellectual progress, in its sincere effort for righteousness and in the beauty of many of its variant types it is justifying the hope and fulfilling the prophecy of great servants of God who entertained this ideal in an age when its adherents were a persecuted minority, accounted in the seats of power as the offscouring of the earth.

Yet a greater ideal than this is dawning on many minds, forbidding them to rest contentedly in the *status quo* of Protestantism. Like the vision of a city of God coming down out of heaven is the thought of a larger Church of Christ than Jerusalem, or Constantinople, or Rome, or Geneva knew. With all its flexibility and comprehensiveness, with its provision for the free action of various temperaments and its toleration of various points of view, there rested on Protestantism at the beginning, and has rested ever since, one characteristic limitation. It was, and is, the instinctive tendency to feel that the fullness of the Church of Christ is already potentially represented in the theologies, institutions and orders of Western Christianity and that the future promises only the expansion of Western institutions until they cover the whole earth. The Christianization of the world has meant, both to the Protestant Church and to the Roman Church, increasing control of the Eastern religious consciousness by Western influence, until the Orient shall have assimilated the

Western interpretations of Christianity, and shall have become Christianized by becoming Westernized in the realm of religious thinking. From this point of view the ideal of the Church stands for expansion by colonization and conquest, until Western Christianity with her Oriental dependencies becomes a world wide spiritual empire on which the sun never sets. To trace the growth of this conception to its sources, and to give an account of the influences that have contributed to it would involve a much more extensive historical review than is possible in this Lecture. I regret that I cannot do more than name some of the influences that have developed in the European mind a disposition to monopolize the right of interpreting and disseminating a religion that was conveyed to Europe by an Oriental after it had been planted in Asia Minor. I conceive that these influences began to operate very early in the history of Latin Christianity, and that one of them was the reaction away from the East that followed the division of the Church. The cleavage was deep; it involved more

than theological disunion, it struck through art and letters and philosophy; it threw the nearer East into shadow and drove back into infinite remoteness the vaguely known pagan world that lay beyond Constantinople; it seemed to leave to the Latin Church sole possession of the apostolic inheritance; an assumption strikingly illustrated in the sixteenth century, when Pope Alexander VI, in order to settle amicably the rival claims of Spanish and Portuguese discoverers, gravely divided the world (then supposed to be flat) into two parts, lying east and west of a line drawn through the South Atlantic; assigning one-half of the earth to each of the claimants.[1] I conceive another of these influences to have been the rise of Mohammedanism and the interposition of its extraordinary strength, as a wall of adamant, between Europe and India. It blocked the immemorial highways of commerce that had led, since before the dawn of history, to peaceful and profitable interchanges across the Indian Ocean by

[1] See Sir William Hunter's "History of British India," Vol. I, Chapter 3.

way of the Red Sea, or through the Persian Gulf and over the desert to Damascus, or out through the Afghan passes, by way of the Caspian, to the Levant and Venice. One by one these pathways were blocked by the inflexible power of Islam, which itself became a menace to the peace of Europe. The ardour of the Crusades was more than religious devotion to the tomb of Christ. It was an opportunity for Latin Christianity and Latin civilization to vent their scorn and hatred of the Oriental world and all its works. Still another influence helping to foster in Europe the spirit of Western separatism was the powerful infusion of Teutonic, Norse and Saxon elements into Latin civilization. These strains had in them no appreciable suggestion of the East. They were, in effect, anti-Oriental. They represented other traditions, other mythologies, other world-views: the bold realism, the hardihood, the practical resource to which the meditative East was both incomprehensible and contemptible. In this they differed from the Celtic element in European

civilization, which ever has retained vestiges of a birthright in the nearer East, vestiges that may be traced in gentle and spiritual traits of French and Irish character, as well as in the tender beauty of the Gallican liturgy reflecting the semi-Oriental influence of Basil and Chrysostom.

With the revival of letters and the growth of commercial institutions in England and the Netherlands came a new birth of interest in the forgotten East. The voyages of Drake and Frobisher were not vague plunges into the unknown. They were parts of a consistent policy to discover new trade routes to the Spice Archipelago and the fabulous treasuries of the Orient. With the discovery of those routes, and, with them, the discovery of the unexploited commercial possibilities of the East, the old religious antipathy was amalgamated with the rancour of avarice, forming that singular blend of distrust and contempt which, until recently, has been the habitual attitude of the Anglo-Saxon mind towards the alien East. When, late in the eighteenth century,

the spirit of missions awoke in England, it is only necessary to recall the abhorrence expressed towards it by many in and out of the Church to perceive how far had advanced the alienation of the West from the East. Clearly Christianity had come to be reckoned as an indigenous possession of the West, in which the alien could claim no part. Such being the received opinion, it was inevitable that, when the evangelical consciousness of Europe and America at length realized and undertook the duty of world-Christianization, the underlying presupposition was that European and American Christianity, as expressed in the accepted formulas of the sects and exhibited in their institutions of worship and discipline, must be the final message to the world. In that spirit it was carried to the East; nor could it, in the nature of the case, have been carried in any other spirit than that. The hope that animated its bearers was, if not a purely denominational hope, one that looked only for the propagation of the same type of Christianity as that which was preached and received in London and

New York. The evidence of this is seen in the prevailing methods of missionary policy in the East directed by boards of overseers in Europe and America. That eminently rational policy has been to proceed abroad upon lines tested and approved at home. Hence we find every form of ecclesiastical polity known to Occidentals reproduced east of Aden, and the superscription of every party that has arisen in the Church at home inscribed on the several groups of converts collected abroad. Again I say, it could not have been otherwise, and the glorious harvests already garnered show that this policy of missions, based on the Protestant *status quo*, has been used of God as a channel of ecumenical grace.

But while this policy is still in its strength, administered from the highest motives, and corroborated by large results, a flood of new suggestion is breaking upon us in these latter days. The glory of a more splendid interpretation of the ideal of the Church of Christ is lighting up the field of thought. Not yet has the full-orbed definition of that vision

risen into view. No man may yet venture to describe that larger Church of Christ as if it were already accomplished. But the Eastern sky is full of light, and one feels that the sunrise may be near. Since the twentieth century opened, the making of world-history has proceeded with unusual rapidity. Events of the first magnitude have occurred, or are in process, the outcome of which may be a readjustment of traditional relations and the establishment of a *modus vivendi* between Asia and Europe not recognized, by the pioneers of Western missionary operations in the East, as within the bounds of possibility.

For the first time in the history of modern civilization an Eastern nation has checked Occidental aggression, repelling the advance of a power superior in resources, entrenched amid European alliances and venerating the Christian religion. An exhibition, unparalleled in history, has occurred, of the moral greatness attainable by a nation without the help of Christianity. Out of a religious ancestry traditionally described by Western

opinion as "the base and black ancestry of heathenism" has emerged a type of manhood which by magnanimity, self-restraint, ethical intelligence and equity has exalted the ideals of the human race. The incredulity of Jewish separatism once asked: Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? It would be according to the tradition of Western separatism if one should ask: Can any good thing come out of Buddhism and Shinto? Nevertheless the facts are spread before the world; it is for us to prepare an hypothesis large enough to contain them. Can any nation foster and display such traits of character without some access to the Eternal Fountain of Good, and some inspiration from the heart of God? As these and many other surprising manifestations of the soul of the East appear, new trains of thought are suggested; stirring the mind with prophetic intimations, disturbing the serenity of old opinions; dismissing unenlightened prejudices. We are awaking to the thought that there are ten times as many Orientals as Occidentals, and that their relation to the kingdom of God, to

say nothing of the kingdoms of this world, may no longer be determined wholly by the thinking and action of the West. In many minds the doubt rises whether, in our conventional theory of the Christianization of the world, we have not been governed too much by Anglo-Saxon pride, in planning how this is to be done; as if, assuredly and only, by us and by the action of Westernizing forces upon Oriental consciousness. In view of fundamental readjustments of world interests now in process, considerations that once would have been dismissed as idle fancies, command attention. Never was it more rational than now to live with an open mind, touching the future development of the world. Never was it more wise to recognize, as the great unknown quantity in the present situation, God's unlimited power to bring about results in ways that, by an earlier age, could not have been anticipated. As the familiar world-programme of orthodoxy is superseded by the breaking in of unprecedented events and the appearance of new forces, one seems to hear, like solemn music, above the world,

the master-word of prophecy: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." To those for whom the Protestant *status quo* is final, and whose confidence in the world-wide sufficiency of Western interpretations of Christianity leads them to ignore the individuality of the Oriental mind and its indefeasible needs and rights, there is no beauty in the vision of that larger Church of Christ which I am considering in this Lecture. It suggests rather vague expansions beneath which is no warrant of truth; unauthorized reproductions of the Church beyond the confines of normal jurisdiction. It is far from my purpose to debate with those committed to this view. It has behind it an impressive tradition. But there are many minds from which has departed the power to remain satisfied with that view, and to which the present state of the world suggests the most awakening possibilities. To those no longer influenced by the prevail-

ing alienation of West from East there is a peculiar joy in witnessing the increasing self-expression of the Orient. It seems to prophesy of the unexhausted resources of God in His world; of the immense reserves at His command to be liberated ultimately for the uses of His kingdom. As one considers the present unfoldings of intellectual and moral strength in the Far East and remembers also the long and patient labours of Western Christians in Eastern lands, planting the seed of truth and interpreting the relation of truth to righteousness, there spreads like the rays before sunrise a new glory of hope over the problem of world-Christianization. Possibly God has a greater way in mind, whereby to Christianize the world, than we of the West have ever dreamed of; a way that shall recognize the age-long religious yearnings of the East as we have never recognized them. It may be His plan to restrict the West to its own place, making it the correlate instead of the controller of the East. It may be His purpose, through the indigenous Christianity of the East, to

build up that larger Church of Christ wherein, by the growth of an Eastern interpretation of the common revelation and an Eastern evolution of Christian experience, there shall be accomplished a supplementing and enriching of the religious life of the world through the mutual interaction of Eastern and Western Christianity in ways that not Jerusalem, nor Constantinople, nor Rome, nor Geneva could, by itself, accomplish. "God is His own interpreter and He will make it plain." As we begin to realize how complacently and confidently we have assumed that the world can only be Christianized by adopting our theologies and our sectarian forms, solemn questions suggest themselves: Who ever gave credentials of universality to Western clerical orders, or to Western ecclesiastical institutions, or to Western denominational confessions? Has God ever pledged Himself to complete the Christianizing of the world through these means? Has God ever limited Himself to the Anglo-Saxon interpretations of the Christian faith,

and set aside as unusable those extraordinary gifts of religious discernment that are peculiar to the temperament of the East? Has God ever disowned those mighty religious aspirations that fill the old ethnic faiths, surviving in pathetic vestiges of their former majesty amidst the modern degenerations of those faiths? Is He not, by the might of His Spirit, able to subdue and purge and transform and recreate those gifts and those aspirations, dedicating them to the knowledge and worship of the Son of God? St. Paul, amidst the decay of Israel, could cry, "Hath God cast away His people? God forbid—God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew!"[1] One who has moved with a reverent mind through the religious life of the East, who has seen the tragedy of its enormous spiritual possibility submerged beneath its enormous moral deficiency, may also cry: Nay! God hath not cast away the suffering, sensitive soul of the East, nor left Himself without a witness in the Oriental conscious-

[1] Romans 11 : 1, 2.

ness. Great are the burdens weighing down the soul of the East; blinding and suffocating are the webs of illusion and fatalism bound upon it; enthralling is the pride of tradition alienating it from the name Christian; dark is the shadow of ethical obscurity enveloping it. But within it remains a latent potency for divine communion and divine interpretation that needs but to be stirred and to be organized by the Spirit of God in the circles of culture to arrest degeneration and to dedicate the superb fabric of the Oriental sense of religion to the worship and service of Jesus Christ. Twenty centuries have passed since the message of an Oriental was heard in Ephesus of the Lesser Asia: crying, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." Nearer with every sunrise comes the age when brilliant leaders of Oriental thought, themselves illumined by the Light of the World conveyed back to the East by faithful disciples from the West, shall bear the same message through the student circles of the Greater

Asia: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." So shall the Christianization of the East be undertaken by Orientals. So shall the religious thinking of the East be directed by Orientals. So shall there come to pass an Eastern Church of Jesus Christ offering Him more precious gifts, yet not less characteristic, than the gold and frankincense and myrrh of the Persian Magi. So shall there be at last that larger Church, that Holy Church throughout all the world, that correspondence and communion of world elements around the common altar of a Semitic faith; fulfilling the prophecy of the Saviour: "I say unto you that many shall come from the East and West and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."[1]

Meanwhile, it is we of the West who must gain breadth and discipline and vision that we may deal with this whole matter worthily and adequately.

Three things the Christianity of the West

[1] Matt. 8: 11.

needs, if it would be ready, in the day of the Lord, to meet and greet the next great interpretation of the churchly ideal. It needs the chastening of the Anglo-Saxon spirit; it needs to realize the democracy of nations; it needs to learn respect for Oriental national aims, and religious aspirations.

The Anglo-Saxon spirit is rich in qualities that make for efficiency, it is capable of splendid exhibitions of physical and moral courage; it is also capable of presumption and provincialism. It is a haughty race-spirit, aggressive, given to threatening, inclined to war, satisfied with itself, prone to intolerance. The institutions of homogeneous peoples are impregnated with the national spirit, and, in some degree, exhibit it. Institutions of religion are no exception. The Christianity of a person, a household, a church or a nation tends to reflect the national spirit, alike in its strength and in its weakness. There are many ancestral qualities of Anglo-Saxonism that adorn the doctrine of God and commend it to the non-

Christian world. Even some of its severer qualities have won the confidence and love of Orientals. Indians revered the inflexible manliness of Lord John Lawrence. But the besetting sin of Anglo-Saxonism in the East is arrogance that disdains what it conquers, and wounds when it essays to help. The unconscious reflection of that race-spirit in some religious efforts of the West in the East has hardened hearts that might be won and widened chasms that might be bridged by substituting for the authority of Churchmanship and the irritating assumption of racial superiority, the perfect chivalry and cosmopolitanism of Him who was meek and lowly in heart. The democracy of nations is a truth that the West is slow of heart to believe. In the soul of the West lives the dream of a divine vocation of empire. It is a Roman inheritance. Through the inspiration of that dream great results of good and evil have followed. The development of the resources of the world has been hastened. The spread of knowledge has been advanced. The conception of international relationships

has been evolved. But respect for Oriental national aims and religious aspirations has had small place in Western thinking. The momentous condition of the world at this time indicates an approaching change. None may safely prophesy the nature of that change, but, if we believe in the present activity of the Spirit of God, we may look for great readjustments in Western thinking, for the chastening of inadmissible ambitions, and for the growing influence of Christ in the East. Christ and Christianity belong naturally to the East. Friction with the West has arrested the progress of a religion that lends itself to all that is most brilliant in Oriental discernment and precious to Oriental sentiment. The readjustment of world relationships upon a basis of equity would be followed by the advance of Christianity among educated Asiatics, and the growth of an Eastern Church of Christ.

When we of the West broaden our conception of the Incarnation of the Son of God sufficiently to view it in its world-wide significance, with eyes purged of racial preju-